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BELL'S EDITION.

THE *WAY OF THE WORLD.*

A COMEDY,

As written by WILLIAM CONGREVE.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

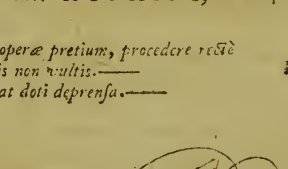
Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

Audire est operæ pretium, procedere rectè
Qui mœchis non vultis.—— HOR. sat. 2 l. 1.
——Metuat doli deprensa.—— IBID.



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MDCCLXXVII.

To the Right Honourable

RALPH,

EARL OF MONTAGUE, *&c.*

My Lord,

WHETHER the world will arraign me of vanity or not, that I have presumed to dedicate this comedy to your Lordship, I am yet in doubt; though it may be it is some degree of vanity even to doubt of it. One who has at any time had the honour of your Lordship's conversation, cannot be supposed to think very meanly of that which he would prefer to your perusal: yet it were to incur the imputation of too much sufficiency, to pretend to such a merit as might abide the test of your Lordship's censure.

Whatever value may be wanting to this play while it is mine, will be sufficiently made up to it, when it is once become your Lordship's: and it is my security, that I cannot have over-rated it more by my dedication, than your Lordship will dignify it by your patronage.

That it succeeded on the stage, was almost beyond my expectation; for but little of it was prepared for that general taste which seems now to be predominant in the palates of our audience.

Those characters which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies, are of fools so gross, that, in my humble opinion, they should rather disturb than divert the well-natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather objects of charity than contempt; and instead of moving our mirth, they ought very often to excite our compassion.

This reflection moved me to design some characters, which should appear ridiculous, not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit; a wit, which, at the same time that it is affected, is also false. As there is some difficulty in the formation of a character of this nature, so there is some hazard which attends the progress of its success upon the stage; for many come to a play, so over-charged with criticism, that they very often let fly their censure, when, through their rashness, they have mistaken their aim. This I had occasion, lately, to observe; for this play had been acted two or three days, before some of these hasty judges could find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Truewit.

I must beg your Lordship's pardon for this digression from the true course of this epistle; but that it may not seem altogether impertinent, I beg that I may plead the occasion of it, in part of that excuse of which I stand in need, for recommending this comedy to your protection. It is only by the countenance of your Lordship, and the few so qualified, that such who write with care and pains can hope to be distinguished: for the prostituted name of poet, promiscuously levels all that bear it.

Terence, the most correct writer in the world, had a Scipio and a Lelius, if not to assist him, at least to support him in his reputation: and, notwithstanding his extraordinary merit, it may be, their countenance was not more than necessary.

The purity of his stile, the delicacy of his turns, and the justness of his characters, were all of them beauties, which the greater part of his audience were incapable of tasting. Some of the coarsest strokes of Plautus, so severely censured by Horace, were more likely to affect the multitude; such who come with expectation to laugh at the last act of a play, and are better entertained with two or three unseasonable jests, than with the artful solution of the fable.

As Terence excelled in his performances, so had he great advantages to encourage his undertakings; for he built most on the foundations of Menander: his plots were generally modelled, and his characters ready drawn to his hand. He copied Menander; and Menander had

no

no leſs light in the formation of his characters, from the obſervations of Theophraſtus, of whom he was a diſciple; and Theophraſtus, it is known, was not only the diſciple, but the immediate ſucceſſor of Ariſtotle, the firſt and greateſt judge of poetry. Theſe were great models to deſign by; and the further advantage which Terence poſſeſſed, towards giving his plays the due ornaments of purity of ſtile, and juſtneſs of manners, was not leſs conſiderable, from the freedom of converſation which was permitted him with Lelius and Scipio, two of the greateſt and moſt polite men of his age. And, indeed, the privilege of ſuch a converſation, is the only certain means of attaining to the perfection of dialogue.

If it has happened in any part of this comedy, that I have gained a turn of ſtile, or expreſſion more correct, or at leaſt more corrigible, than in thoſe which I have formerly written, I muſt, with equal pride and gratitude, aſcribe it to the honour of your Lordſhip's admitting me into your converſation, and that of a ſociety where every body elſe was ſo well worthy of you, in your retirement, laſt ſummer, from the town; for it was immediately after that this comedy was written. If I have failed in my performance, it is only to be regretted, where there were ſo many, not inferior either to a Scipio or a Lelius, that that there ſhould be one wanting equal in capacity to a Terence.

If I am not miſtaken, poetry is almoſt the only art which has not yet laid claim to your Lordſhip's patronage. Architecture and painting, to the great honour of our country, have flouriſhed under your influence and protection. In the mean time, Poetry, the eldeſt ſiſter of all arts, and parent of moſt, ſeems to have reſigned her birthright, by having neglected to pay her duty to your Lordſhip; and by permitting others of a later extraction to prepoſſeſs that place in your eſteem, to which none can pretend a better title. Poetry, in its nature, is ſacred to the good and great; the relation between them is reciprocal, and they are ever propitious to it. It is the privilege of poetry to addreſs to them, and it is their prerogative alone to give it protection.

This received maxim is a general apology for all writers who conſecrate their labours to great men: but I

could wish, at this time, that this address were exempted from the common pretence of all dedications; and as I can distinguish your Lordship even among the most deserving, so this offering might become remarkable by some particular instance of respect, which should assure your Lordship, that I am, with all due sense of your extreme worthiness and humanity,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

TO

Mr. CONGREVE;

OCCASIONED BY HIS

COMEDY,

CALLED THE

WAY OF THE WORLD.

WHEN pleaſure's falling to the low delight,
In vain the joys of the uncertain ſight;
No ſenſe of wit when rude ſpectators know,
But in diſtorted geſture, farce and ſhow:
How could, great author, your aſpiring mind
Dare to write only to the few refin'd;
Yet tho' that nice ambition you purſue,
'Tis not in Congreve's power to pleaſe but few.
Implicitly devoted to his fame,
Well-dreſs'd barbarians know his awful name;
Tho' ſenſeleſs they're of mirth, but when they laugh,
As they feel wine, but when till drunk, they quaff.
On you, from fate, a laviſh portion fell,
In ev'ry way of writing to excel.
Your muſe applauſe to Arabella brings,
In notes as ſweet as Arabella ſings.
Whene'er you draw an undiſſembled woe,
With ſweet diſtreſs your rural numbers flow.
Paſtora's the complaint of ev'ry ſwain,
Paſtora ſtill the echo of the plain!
Or if your muſe deſcribe, with warming force,
The wounded Frenchman falling from his horſe;

And

And her own William glorious in the ſtrife,
Beſtowing on the proſtrate foe his life:
You the great act as gen'rouſly rehearſe,
And all the Engliſh fury's in your verſe.
By your ſelected ſcenes, and handſome choice,
Ennobled Comedy exalts her voice;
You check unjuſt eſteem, and fond deſire,
And teach to ſcorn what elſe we ſhould admire;
The juſt impreſſion taught by you we bear.
The player acts the world, the world the play'r;
Whom ſtill that world unjuſtly diſeſteems,
Tho' he, alone, profeſſes what he ſeems:
But when your muſe aſſumes her tragic part,
She conquers and ſhe reigns in ev'ry heart;
To mourn with her men cheat their private woe,
And gen'rous pity's all the grief they know.
The widow, who impatient of delay,
From the town-joys muſt maſk it to the play,
Joins with your Mourning Bride's reſiſtleſs moan,
And weeps a loſs ſhe ſlighted, when her own.
You give us torment, and you give us eaſe,
And vary our afflictions as you pleaſe.
Is not a heart ſo kind as yours in pain,
To load your friends with cares you only feign;
Your friends in grief, compos'd yourſelf, to leave?
But 'tis the only way you'll e'er deceive.
Then ſtill, great Sir, your moving pow'r employ,
To lull our ſorrow, and correct our joy.

R. STEELE.

PROLOGUE.

OF those few fools who with ill stars are curst,
Sure scribbling fools, call'd poets, fare the worst;
For they're a set of fools which Fortune makes,
And after she has made them fools, forsakes.
With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent case,
For Fortune favours all her ideot-race;
In her own nest the cuckoo-eggs we find,
O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling-kind.
No portion for her own she has to spare,
So much she doats on her adopted care.
Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffer'd at first some trifling stakes to win:
But what unequal hazards do they run!
Each time they write, they venture all they've won:
The 'squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone.
This author, heretofore, has found your favour;
But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.
To build on that might prove a vain presumption,
Should grants, to poets made, admit resumption:
And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,
If that be found a forfeited estate.
He owns with toil he wrought the following scenes;
But if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dulness on mature deliberation.
He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off scene,
Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain,
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.
Some plot we think he has, and some new thought;
Some humour too, no farce; but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
For so reform'd a town, who dares correct?
To please, this time, has been his sole pretence;
He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.
Should he, by chance, a knave or fool expose,
That hurts none here—sure here are none of those.
In short, our play shall (with your leave to shew it)
Give you one instance of a passive poet,
Who to your judgments yields all resignation,
To save or damn, after your own discretion.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

	Drury-Lane.	*Covent-Garden.*
Fainall, in love with Mrs. *Marwood*,	Mr. Reddish.	Mr. Wroughton.
Mirabell, in love with Mrs. *Millamant*,	Mr. Smith.	Mr. Lewis.
Witwoud, followers of *Mill.*	Mr. King.	Mr. Lee Lewes.
Petulant, followers of *Mill.*	Mr. Baddeley.	Mr. Woodward.
Sir Wilful Witwoud, half brother to *Witwoud*, and nephew to Lady *Wishfort*.	Mr. Yates.	Mr. Dunstall.
Waitwell, servant to *Mirabell*,	Mr. Parsons.	Mr. Wilson.

WOMEN.

Lady *Wishfort*, enemy to *Mirabell*, for having falsely pretended love to her,	Mrs. Hopkins.	Mrs. Pitt.
Mrs. *Millamant*, a fine lady, niece to Lady *Wishfort*, and loves *Mirabell*,	Mrs. Abington.	Mrs. Barry.
Mrs. *Marwood*, friend to Mr. *Fainall*, and likes *Mirabell*.	Miss Sherry.	Mrs. Mattocks.
Mrs. *Fainall*, daughter to Lady *Wishfort*, and wife to *Fainall*,	Mrs. Greville.	Mrs. Whitefield.
Foible, woman to Lady *Wishfort*,	Miss Pope.	Mrs. Green.
Mincing, woman to Mrs *Millamant*,	Miss Platt.	Mrs. Pouffin.

Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants.

SCENE, *LONDON.*

The Time equal to that of the Presentation.

THE

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

*** *The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Chocolate-house.*

Mirabell *and* Fainall [*rising from cards*] Betty *waiting.*

MIRABELL.

YOU are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mira. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indfferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester, lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mira. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining your pleasures.

Fain. Pr'ythee, why so reserv'd? Something has put you out of humour.

Mira. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrell'd last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a stoick. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by.

Mira. Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse,

her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old lady Wishfort came in.——

Fain. O there it is then——She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason——What, then my wife was there?

Mira. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whisper'd one another; then complain'd aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mira. For which reason I resolv'd not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity, with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and with a constrained smile told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mira. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such resignation.

Fain. What! tho' half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mira. I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights; they have them three times a week, and meet by turns, at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murder'd reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved, that to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwood and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mira. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and full of the vigour of fifty-five,

five, declares for a friend and ratafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal you love to her niece, has provoked this separation: had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mira. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labour. The devil's in't if an old woman is to be flattered farther, unless a man should endeavour downright personally to debauch her; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mira. She was always civil to me, till of late; I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice; and think that she who does not refuse 'em ev'ry thing, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and tho' you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing; you have too much generosity, not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected; and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mira. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confess you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you, than is your wife.

Fain. Fy, fy, friend, if you grow censorious, I must leave you——I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mira. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwood—Bring me ſome chocolate. [*Exit.*

Mira. Betty, what ſays our clock?

Bet. Turn'd of the laſt canonical hour, Sir.

Mira. How pertinently the jade anſwers me! Ha! almoſt one o'clock! [*Looking on his watch*] Oh, y'are come——

Enter Footman.

Mira. Well; is the grand affair over? You have been ſomething tedious.

Serv. Sir, there's ſuch coupling at Pancras, that they ſtand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the laſt couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of diſpatch, beſides, the parſon growing hoarſe, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; ſo we drove round to Duke's Place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mira. So, ſo, you are ſure they are married.

Serv. Married and bedded, Sir: I am witneſs.

Mira. Have you the certificate?

Serv. Here it is, Sir.

'*Mira.* Has the Taylor brought Waitwell's clothes 'home, and the new liveries?

'*Serv.* Yes, Sir.'

Mira. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the conſummation 'till farther order; bid Waitwell ſhake his ears, and dame Partlet ruſtle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Roſamond's pond; that I may ſee her before ſhe returns to her lady: and, as you tender your ears, be ſecret. [*Exit* Footman.

Enter Fainall,

Fain. Joy of your ſucceſs, Mirabell; you look pleas'd.

Mira. Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of ſome ſort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for diſcovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of conſequence ſhould be diſcreet, will ſuffer your wife to be of ſuch a party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Beſides, moſt who are engaged, are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give ſcandal.

Mira. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the ſcandal: for a woman who is not a fool,

a fool, can have but one reaſon for aſſociating with a man who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you ſee Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

Mira. Of her underſtanding I am, if not of her perſon.

Fain. You do her wrong; for to give her her due, ſhe has wit.

Mira. She has beauty enough to make any man think ſo; and complaiſance enough not to contradict him who ſhall tell her ſo.

Fain. For a paſſionate lover, methinks you are a man ſomewhat too diſcerning in the failings of your miſtreſs.

Mira. And for a diſcerning man, ſomewhat too paſſionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay like her for her faults. Her follies are ſo natural, or ſo artful, that they become her; and thoſe affectations which in another woman would be odious, ſerve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, ſhe once uſed me with that inſolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; ſifted her, and ſeparated her failings; 'I ſtudied 'em and 'got 'em by rote. The catalogue was ſo large, that I 'was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her 'heartily: to which end I ſo uſed myſelf to think of 'em, 'that at length, contrary to my deſign and expectation, 'they gave me every hour leſs and leſs diſturbance; 'till 'in a few days it became habitual to me, to remember '''em without being diſpleas'd.' They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and in all probability in a little time longer, I ſhall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and my life on't you are your own man again.

Mira. Say you ſo?

Fain. I, I, I have experience; I have a wife, and ſo forth.

Enter a Meſſenger.

Meſſ. Is one ſquire Witwoud here?

Bet. Yes; what's your buſineſs?

Meſſ. I have a letter for him, from his brother Sir Wilful, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Bet. He's in the next room, friend——That way.

[*Exit* Meſſenger.

Mira. What, is the chief of that noble family in town, Sir Wilful Witwoud?

Fain. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

Mira. I have seen him, he promises to be an extraordinary person; I think you have the honour to be related to him.

Fain. Yes; he is half brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my Lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

Mira. I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mira. For travel! Why the man that I mean is above forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mira. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

Mira. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, any thing related?

Fain. Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

'*Mira.* So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and 'the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.'

Fain. Sir Wilful is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy.—But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in the Tempest; and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good-nature, and does not always want wit.

Mira. Not always; but as often as his memory fails him, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folk's

folk's wit. He is one, whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to endured. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptious; 'for he 'so passionately affects the reputation of understanding 'raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and 'call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and 'fire.'

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original.

Enter Witwoud.

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall; Mirabell, pity me.

Mira. I do from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Bet. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, Sir?

Wit. Ay, but no other?

Bet. No, Sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard——A messenger, a mule, a beast of burden, he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another; and what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mira. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

Wit. Ay, ay, my half brother, my half brother; he is no nearer, upon honour.

Mira. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a soul.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell, *le drole!* Good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him.—Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say any thing in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

Mira. You had better ſtep and aſk his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

Wit. Mirabell.

Mira. Ay.

Wit. My dear, I aſk ten thouſand pardons:——Gad I have forgot what I was going to ſay to you.

Mir. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but pr'ythee excuſe me,—my memory is ſuch a memory.

Mira. Have a care of ſuch apologies, Witwoud;—for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the ſpleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money,—my money it was ——I have no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play;—for you are ſure to be too hard for him at repartee: ſince you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune muſt be his of courſe.

Mira. I don't find that Petulant confeſſes the ſuperiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates——Petulant's my friend, and a very honeſt fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a ſmattering——Faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd ſort of a ſmall wit: nay, I'll do him juſtice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him——And if he had any judgment in the world,—he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fain. You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred.

Wit. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I muſt own——No more breeding than a bum-baily, that I grant you——'Tis pity; the fellow has fire and life.

Mira. What, courage?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that,—I can't ſay as to that——Yes, faith, in controverſy, he'll contradict any body.

Mira. Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he ſpeaks;—we have all our failings: you are too hard upon him,

him, you are faith. Let me excuſe him,——I can defend moſt of his faults, except one or two: one he has, that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him—That indeed I could wiſh were otherwiſe.

Mira. Ay, marry; what's that, Witwoud?

Wit. Oh, pardon me——Expoſe the infirmities of my friend.—No, my dear, excuſe me there.

Fain. What I warrant he's inſincere, or 'tis ſome ſuch trifle.

Wit. No, no, what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that, his wit will excuſe that: a wit ſhould no more be ſincere, than a woman conſtant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mira. May be you think him too poſitive?

Wit. No, no, his being poſitive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up converſation.

Fain. Too illiterate.

Wit. That, that's his happineſs—His want of learning gives him the more opportunity to ſhew his natural parts.

Mira. He wants words.

Wit. Ay; but I like him for that now; for his want of words gives me the pleaſure very often to explain his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent.

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mira. Vain.

Wit. No.

Mira. What, he ſpeaks unſeaſonable truths ſometimes, becauſe he has not wit enough to invent an evaſion.

Wit. Truths! Ha, ha, ha! No, no; ſince you will have it—I mean, he never ſpeaks truth at all—that's all. He will lie like a chamberbaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

Enter Coachman.

Coach. Is maſter Petulant here, miſtreſs?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach would ſpeak with him.

Fain. Oh, brave Petulant! Three!

Bet.

Bet. I'll tell him. [*Exit.*

'*Coach.* You muſt bring two diſhes of chocolate and 'a glaſs of cinnamon-water. [*Exit.*

'*Wit.* That ſhould be for two faſting ſtrumpets, and a 'bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what 'the three are.

'*Mira.* You are very free with your friend's acquaint-'ance.

Wit. 'Ay, ay, friendſhip without freedom is as dull as 'love without enjoyment, or wine without toaſting; 'but to tell you a ſecret,' theſe are trulls whom he allows coach hire, and ſomething more, by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mira. How!

Wit. You ſhall ſee he won't go to 'em, becauſe there's no more company here to take notice of him.——Why this is nothing to what he uſed to do:—before he found out this way, I have known him call for himſelf——

Fain. Call for himſelf! What doſt thou mean?

Wit. Mean! why he would ſlip you out of this chocolate-houſe, juſt when you had been talking to him—As ſoon as your back was turned—whip he was gone;—then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and ſcarf, and a maſk, flap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would ſend in for himſelf; that is, I mean, call for himſelf, wait for himſelf; nay, and what's more, not finding himſelf, ſometimes leave a letter for himſelf.

Mira. I confeſs this is ſomething extraordinary——I believe he waits for himſelf now, he is ſo long a coming:—Oh, I aſk his pardon.

Enter Betty.

Bet. Sir, the coach ſtays.

Enter Petulant.

Pet. Well, well; I come;—'Sbud, a man had as good be a profeſſed midwife, as a profeſſed whoremaſter, at this rate; to be knocked up, and raiſed at all hours, and in all places. Pox on them, I won't come—D'ye hear, tell them I won't come——Let them ſnivel and cry their hearts out.

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it paſs——I have a humour to be cruel.

Mira. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition! condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humour——'By this hand, if they were your—a—a '—your what-dee-call-'ems themselves, they must wait 'or rub off, if I want appetite.

'*Mira.* What-dee-call-'ems! What are they, Witwoud?

'*Wit.* Empresses, my dear——By your what-dee-'call-'ems, he means Sultana queens.

'*Pet.* Ay, Roxana's.

'*Mira.* Cry your mercy.

'*Fain.* Witwoud says they are——

'*Pet.* What does he say they are?

'*Wit.* I! fine ladies, I say.

'*Pet.* Pass on, Witwoud——Harkee, by this light 'his relations—Two co-heiresses his cousins, and an old 'aunt, who loves catterwauling better than a conven-'ticle.

'*Wit.* Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue 'would come off—Ha, ha, ha! gad, I can't be angry 'with him, if he had said they were my mother and my 'sisters.

'*Mira.* No.

'*Wit.* No; the rogue's wit and readiness of inven-'tion charm me; dear Petulant.'

Bet. They are gone, Sir, in great anger.

Pet. Enough, let them trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mira. Have you not left off your impudent pretension there yet? I shall cut your throat, some time or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Ay, ay, let that pass——There are other throats to be cut——

Mira. Meaning mine, Sir?

Pet. Not I—I mean nobody—I know nothing—— But there are uncles and nephews in the world—and they may be rivals—What then, all's one for that—

Mira.

Mira. Now, harkee, Petulant, come hither—Explain, or I ſhall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain; I know nothing—Why you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my lady Wiſhfort's?

Mira. True.

Pet. Why, that's enough—You and he are not friends; and if he ſhould marry and have a child, you may be diſinherited, ha?

Mira. Where haſt thou ſtumbled upon all this truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why then ſay I know ſomething.

Mira. Come, thou art an honeſt fellow, Petulant, and ſhalt make love to my miſtreſs, thou ſha't, faith. What haſt thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I! nothing I. If throats are to be cut, let ſwords claſh; ſnug's the word, I ſhrug and am ſilent.

Mira. Oh, raillery, raillery. Come, I know thou art in the women's ſecrets—What, you're a cabaliſt; I know you ſtaid at Millamant's laſt night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle, or me? Tell me. If thou hadſt but good-nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, would ſhew as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be ſeen by thee, than Mercury is by the ſun. Come, I'm ſure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common ſenſe then, for the future?

Mira. Faith, I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that Heaven may grant it thee in the mean time.

Pet. Well, harkee.

Fain. Petulant and you both will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

Wit. Pſha, pſha, that ſhe laughs at Petulant is plain. And for my part—But that it is almoſt a faſhion to admire her, I ſhould—Harkee—To tell you a ſecret, but let it go no farther—Between friends, I ſhall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handſome; but ſhe's a fort of an uncertain woman.

Fain.

Fain. I thought you had died for her.

Wit. Umph—No——

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow any body else—Now, demme, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We staid pretty late there last night; and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town,—and is between him and the best part of his estate; Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell worse than a Quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobbed, i'faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman, and a kind of a humourist.

Mira. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night.

Pet. The quintessence. May be Witwoud knows more, he stayed longer——Besides, they never mind him; they say any thing before him.

Mira. I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

Pet. Ay, *tête-à-tête*; but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mira. You do?

Pet. Ay, ay; pox, I'm malicious, man. Now he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him——The fellow's well bred; he's what you call a——Whatdee-call-'em, a fine gentleman: but he's silly withal.

Mira. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the park; the ladies talked of being there.

Mira. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother, Sir Willful's arrival.

Wit.

Wit. No, no; he comes to his aunt's, my lady Wishfort: pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. Oh, rare Petulant; thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a humour to be severe.

Mira. Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves—Let not us be accessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what? Then let them either shew their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else shew their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mira. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou oughtest to be most ashamed thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand——I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill breeding.

Mira. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill-manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE, *St. James's Park.*

Mrs. Fainall *and Mrs.* Marwood.

Mrs. Fainall.

AY, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doating, or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies

jealouſies are inſupportable: and when they ceaſe to love (we ought to think at leaſt) they loathe; they look upon us with horror and diſtaſte; they meet us like the ghoſts of what we were, and as from ſuch, fly from us.

Mrs. Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy circumſtance of life, that love ſhould ever die before us; and that the man ſo often ſhould outlive the lover. But ſay what you will, 'tis better to be left than never to have been lov'd. To paſs our youth in dull indifference, to refuſe the ſweets of life, becauſe they once muſt leave us, is as prepoſterous, as to wiſh to have been born old, becauſe we one day muſt be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waſte, but it ſhall never ruſt in my poſſeſſion.

Mrs. Fain. Then it ſeems you diſſemble an averſion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humour.

Mrs. Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no taſte of thoſe inſipid dry diſcourſes, with which our ſex of force muſt entertain themſelves, apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profeſs eternal friendſhips, and ſeem to doat like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to perſevere. Love will reſume his empire in our breaſts, and every heart, or ſoon or late, receive and re-admit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. Fain. Bleſs me, how have I been deceived! Why you profeſs a libertine.

Mrs. Mar. You ſee my friendſhip by my freedom. Come, be as ſincere, acknowledge that your ſentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fain. Never.

Mrs. Mar. You hate mankind?

Mrs. Fain. Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs. Mar. Your huſband?

Mrs. Fain. Moſt tranſcendently; ay, though I ſay it, meritoriouſly.

Mrs. Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. Fain. There.

Mrs. Mar. I join with you; what I have ſaid has been to try you.

Mrs. Fain. Is it poſſible? Doſt thou hate thoſe vipers, men?

Mrs. Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come

to deſpiſe 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fain. There ſpoke the ſpirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.

Mrs. Mar. And yet I am thinking ſometimes to carry my averſion farther.

Mrs. Fain. How?

Mrs. Mar. Faith, by marrying; 'if I could but find 'one that loved me very well, and would be thoroughly 'ſenſible of ill uſage, I think I ſhould do myſelf the 'violence of undergoing the ceremony.

'*Mrs. Fain.* You would not make him a cuckold?

'*Mrs. Mar.* No; but I'd make him believe I did, and 'that's as bad.

'*Mrs. Fain.* Why had you not as good do it?

'*Mrs. Mar.* Oh, if he ſhould ever diſcover it, he 'would then know the worſt, and be out of his pain; 'but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of 'fear and jealouſy.

'*Mrs. Fain.* Ingenious miſchief!' Would thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. Would I were.

Mrs. Fain. You change colour.

Mrs. Mar. Becauſe I hate him.

Mrs. Fain. So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reaſon have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs. Mar. I never loved him; he is, and always was, inſufferably proud.

Mrs. Fain. By the reaſon you give for your averſion, one would think it diſſembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies muſt acquit him.

Mrs. Mar. Oh, then it ſeems you are one of his favourable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs. Fain. Do I? I think I am a little ſick o' the ſudden.

Mrs. Mar. What ails you?

Mrs. Fain. My huſband. Don't you ſee him? He turned ſhort upon me unawares, and has almoſt overcome me.

Enter Fainall *and* Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. Ha, ha, ha! he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs.

Mrs. Fain. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear.

Mrs. Fain. My ſoul.

Fain. You don't look well to-day, child.

Mrs. Fain. D'ye think ſo?

Mira. He's the only man that does, Madam.

Mrs. Fain. The only man that would tell me ſo at leaſt; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fain. Oh, my dear, I am ſatisfied of your tenderneſs: I know you cannot reſent any thing from me; eſpecially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs. Fain. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleaſant relation laſt night, I would fain hear it out.

Mira. The perſons concerned in that affair, have yet a tolerable reputation.——I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be cenſorious.

Mrs. Fain. He has a humour more prevailing than his curioſity, and will willingly diſpenſe with the hearing of one ſcandalous ſtory, to avoid giving an occaſion to make another, by being ſeen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promiſe you will oblige us both. [*Exeunt* Mira. *and Mrs.* Fain.

Fain. Excellent creature! Well, ſure if I ſhould live to be rid of my wife, I ſhould be a miſerable man.

Mrs. Mar. Ay?

Fain. For having only that one hope, the accompliſhment of it, of conſequence, muſt put an end to all my hopes; and what a wretch is he who muſt ſurvive his hopes! Nothing remains, when that day comes, but to ſit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mrs. Mar. Will you not follow them.

Fain. Faith, I think not.

Mrs. Mar. Pray let us; I have a reaſon.

Fain. You are not jealous?

Mrs. Mar. Of whom?

Fain. Of Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. If I am, is it inconſiſtent with my love to you, that I am tender of your honour?

Fain. You would intimate then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

Mrs. Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mrs. Mar. It may be you are deceived.

Fain. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

Mrs. Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceived, Madam, and you are false.

Mrs. Mar. That I am false! What mean you?

Fain. To let you know, I see through all your little arts—Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another, have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

Mrs. Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not——'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife; that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures; and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

Mrs. Mar. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fain. With infidelity, with loving another, with love of Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis false. I challenge you to shew an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? to undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mrs. Mar. My obligations to my lady urged me: I had professed a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

Fain.

Fain. What, was it conſcience then? Profeſſed a friendſhip! Oh, the pious friendſhips of the female ſex!

Mrs. Mar. More tender, more ſincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether profeſſing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

Fain. Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend too.

Mrs. Mar. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you, upbraid me! Have I been falſe to her, through ſtrict fidelity to you, and ſacrificed my friendſhip to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baſeneſs to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit? To you it ſhould be meritorious, that I have been vicious: and do you reflect that guilt upon me, which ſhould lie buried in your boſom?

Fain. You miſinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the ſlight account you once could make of ſtricteſt ties, when ſet in competition with your love to me

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis falſe, you urged it with deliberate malice—' I was ſpoke in ſcorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your guilt, not your reſentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealouſy: but you are ſtung to find you are diſcovered.

Mrs. Mar. It ſhall be all diſcovered. You too ſhall be diſcovered; be ſure you ſhall. I can but be expoſed—If I do it myſelf I ſhall prevent your baſeneſs.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mrs. Mar. Diſcloſe it to your wife; own what has paſt between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mrs. Mar. By all my wrongs I'll do't——I'll publiſh to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: with both I truſted you, you bankrupt, in honour, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preſerved. Your fortune has been beſtowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleaſures which we both have ſhared. Yet, had not you been falſe, I had ere this repaid it——' Tis true——had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have ſtolen their marriage, my lady had been incenſed beyond all means of reconcilement: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have deſcended

to my wife;——and wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mrs. Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence.

Fain. Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not impriſoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handſome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and ſomething of a conſtitution to buſtle through the ways of wedlock, and this world. Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

Mrs. Mar. Impoſſible! Truth and you are inconſiſtent ——— I hate you, and ſhall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs. Mar. I loathe the name of love after ſuch uſage; and next to the guilt with which you would aſperſe me, I ſcorn you moſt. Farewel.

Fain. Nay, we muſt not part thus.

Mrs. Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm ſorry.

Mrs. Mar. I care not——Let me go——Break my hands, do———I'd leave them to get looſe.

Fain. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs. Mar. Well, I have deſerved it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs. Mar. Poor diſſembling! Oh, that——Well, it is not yet———

Fain. What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late———

Mrs. Mar. No, it is not yet too late———I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mrs. Mar. But not to loathe, deteſt, abhor mankind, myſelf, and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance——Come, I aſk your pardon——No tears——I was to blame; I could not love you, and be eaſy in my doubts—Pray forbear—— I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends;———I'll hate my wife yet more; damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all ſhe's worth, and we'll retire ſomewhere, any

any where, to another world—I'll marry thee—Be pacified—'Sdeath, they come! hide your face, your tears—You have a maſk, wear it a moment. This way, this way, be perſuaded. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mirabel *and Mrs.* Fainwell.

Mrs. Fain. They are here yet.

Mira. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs. Fain. While I only hated my huſband, I could bear to ſee him; but ſince I have deſpiſed him, he's too offenſive.

Mira. Oh, you ſhould hate with prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Yes, for I have loved with indiſcretion.

Mira. You ſhould have juſt ſo much diſguſt for your huſband, as may be ſufficient to make you reliſh your lover.

Mrs. Fain. You have been the cauſe that I have loved without bounds, and would you ſet limits to that averſion of which you have been the occaſion? Why did you make me marry this man?

Mir. 'Why do we daily commit diſagreeable and dangerous actions? To ſave that idol reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that conſequence, of which you were apprehenſive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a huſband? I knew Fainall to be a man laviſh of his morals, an intereſted and profeſſing friend, a falſe and a deſigning lover; yet one whoſe wit and outward fair behaviour have gained a reputation with the town, enough to make that woman ſtand excuſed, who has ſuffered herſelf to be won by his addreſſes. A better man ought not to have been ſacrificed to the occaſion; a worſe had not anſwered to the purpoſe.' When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs. Fain. I ought to ſtand in ſome degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mira. 'In juſtice to you,' I have made you privy to my whole deſign, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs. Fain. Whom have you inſtructed to repreſent your pretended uncle?

Mira. Waitwell, my ſervant.

Mrs. Fain. He is an humble ſervant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your intereſt.

Mira.

Mira. Care is taken for that——She is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs. Fain. Who?

Mira. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my ſervant to betray me, by truſting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, ſhould conſent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Moſca in the Fox, ſtand upon terms, ſo I made him ſure before-hand.

Mrs. Fain. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will diſcover the impoſture betimes; and releaſe her, by producing the certificate of her gallant's former marriage.

Mira. Yes, upon condition that ſhe conſent to my marriage with her niece, and ſurrender the moiety of her fortune in her poſſeſſion.

Mrs. Fain. She talk'd laſt night of endeavouring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mira. That was by Foible's direction, and my inſtruction, that ſhe might ſeem to carry it more privately.

Mrs. Fain. Well, I have an opinion of your ſucceſs; for I believe my lady will do any thing to get an huſband; and when ſhe has this, which you have provided for her, I ſuppoſe ſhe will ſubmit to any thing to get rid of him.

Mira. Yes, I think the good lady would marry any thing that reſembled a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs. Fain. Female frailty! 'We muſt all come to it, 'if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a falſe ap-'petite, when the true is decayed.

'*Mira.* An old woman's appetite is depraved like that 'of a girl—'Tis the green-ſickneſs of a ſecond child-'hood; and, like the faint offer of a latter ſpring, ſerves 'but to uſher in the fall; and withers in an affected 'bloom.

'*Mrs. Fain.*' But here's your miſtreſs.

Enter Mrs. Millamant, Witwoud, *and* Mincing.

Mira. Here ſhe comes i'faith, full ſail, with her fan ſpread and ſtreamers out, and a ſhoal of fools for tenders ——Ha, no, I cry her mercy.

Mrs. Fain. I ſee but one poor empty ſculler; and he tows her woman after him.

Mira.

Mira. You seem to be unattended, Madam,——You us'd to have the *beau monde* throng after you ; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like moths about a candle——I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Milla. O I have deny'd myself airs to-day. I have walk'd as fast through the crowd——

Wit. As a favourite just disgraced ; and with as few followers.

Milla. Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes : for I am as sick of 'em——

Wit. As a physician of a good air——I cannot help it, Madam, tho' 'tis against myself.

Milla. Yet, again ; Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Wit. Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a skreen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs. Fain. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long ?

Milla. Long ! Lord, have I not made violent haste ? I have ask'd ev'ry living thing I met for you ; I have enquir'd after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes——No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mira. By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Mrs. Fain. You were dressed before I came abroad.

Milla. Ay, that's true——O but then I had——Mincing, what had I ? Why was I so long ?

Minc. O, Mem, your Laship staid to peruse a pacquet of letters.

Milla. O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—Nobody knows how to write letters ; and yet one has 'em one does not know why—They serve one to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way ? Pray, Madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters ? I find I must keep copies.

Milla. Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I try'd once, Mincing.

Minc.

Minc. O, Mem, I ſhall never forget it.

Milla. Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

Minc. 'Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, Mem, and all to no purpoſe. But when your Laſhip pins it up with poetry, it ſits ſo pleaſant the next day as any thing, and is ſo pure and ſo crips.

Wit. Indeed! ſo crips?

Minc. You're ſuch a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

Milla. Mirabell, did you take exceptions laſt night? O ay, and went away—Now I think on't, I'm angry?—No, now I think on't I am pleas'd—For I believe I gave you ſome pain.

Mira. Does that pleaſe you?

Milla. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mira. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleaſing.

Milla. O, I aſk your pardon for that—One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty one parts with one's power: and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mira. Ay, ay; ſuffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to deſtroy your lover—And then how vain, how loſt a thing you'll be? Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handſome when you have loſt your lover; your beauty dies upon the inſtant: for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he beſtows your charms——Your glaſs is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glaſs mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and diſcover beauties in it: for that reflects our praiſes, rather than your face.

Milla. O the vanity of theſe men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handſome! Now you muſt know they could not commend one, if one was not handſome. Beauty the lover's gift,—Lord, what is a lover that it can give? Why one makes lovers as faſt as one pleaſes, and they live as long as one pleaſes, and they die as ſoon as one pleaſes: and then, if one pleaſes, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why you make no more of making of lovers, Madam, than of making ſo many card-matches.

Milla.

Milla. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: they can but reflect what we look and say; vain empty things, if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mira. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe too the greatest pleasures of your life.

Milla. How so?

Mira. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves prais'd; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait 'till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Milla. O fiction; Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mira. Draw off Witwoud. [*Aside to* Mrs. Fainall.

Mrs. Fain. Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud. [*Exeunt* Mrs. Fain. *and* Witwoud.

Mira. I would beg a little private audience too—— You had the tyranny to deny me last night; though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concern'd my love.

Milla. You saw I was engag'd.

Mira. Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools: things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable: or if they were, it shou'd be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Milla. I please myself——Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mira. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Milla. Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it, next to *assa fœtida.*

Mira. You are in a course of fools.

Milla. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom——you'll displease me——I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you——We shan't agree.

Mira. Not in our physic it may be.

Milla.

Milla. And yet our diſtemper in all likelihood will be the ſame; for we ſhall be ſick of one another. I ſhan't endure to be reprimanded, nor inſtructed, 'tis ſo dull to act always by advice, and ſo tedious to be told of one's faults——I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you Mirabell——I'm reſolv'd——I think——You may go——Ha, ha, ha! What would you give that you could help loving me?

Mira. I would give ſomething that you did not know I could not help it.

Milla. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you ſay to me?

Mira. I ſay that a man may as ſoon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honeſty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and ſincerity.

Milla. Sententious Mirabell! Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wiſe face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapeſtry hanging.

Mira. You are merry, Madam; but I would perſuade you for a moment to be ſerious.

Milla. What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impoſſible I ſhould hold mine. Well, after all, there is ſomething very moving in a love-ſick face. Ha, ha, ha—Well I won't laugh, don't be peeviſh, ——Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now——Nay, if you are ſo tedious, fare you well? I ſee they are walking away.

Mira. Can you find, in the variety of your diſpoſition, one moment——

Milla. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to ſpeed—No.

Mira. But how you come to know it——

Milla. Without the help of the devil, you can't imagine, unleſs ſhe ſhould tell me herſelf. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to conſider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

[*Exit.*

Mira. I have ſomething more—Gone—Think on you! To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a caſe of more ſteady contemplation; 'a very 'tranquility of mind and manſion. A fellow that lives in

'a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the 'heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no 'point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by 'which they are not turn'd; and by one as well as ano-'ther; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To 'know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made 'wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play 'the fool by the force of instinct'—Oh, here come my pair of turtles.—What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine's day over with you yet?

Enter Waitwell *and* Foible.

Mira. Sirrah, Waitwell, why sure you think you were marry'd for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

Wait. Your pardon, Sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, Sir; I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, Sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mira. Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

Foib. O-la, Sir, I'm so asham'd—I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, Sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did, indeed, Sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

Mira. That I believe.

Foib. But I told my lady, as you instructed me, Sir, that I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to shew him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamour'd with her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet, and worship the original.

Mira. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, Sir, I think so.

Foib. You have seen Madam Millamant, Sir?

Mira. Yes.

Foib. I told her, Sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mira. Your diligence will merit more——in the mean time—— [*Gives money.*

Foib. O dear Sir, your humble ſervant.

Wait. Spouſe.

Mira. Sand off, Sir, not a penny——Go on and proſper, Foible——The leaſe ſhall be made good, and the farm ſtock'd, if we ſucceed.

Foib. I don't queſtion your generoſity, Sir; and you need not doubt of ſucceſs. If you have no more commands, Sir, I'll be gone; I'm ſure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dreſs 'till I come———O dear, I'm ſure that [*looking out.*] was Mrs. Marwood, that went by in a maſk, if ſhe has ſeen me with you I'm ſure ſhe'll tell my lady. I'll make haſte home and prevent her. Your ſervant, Sir. B'w'y Waitwell. [*Exit.*

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you pleaſe. The jade's ſo pert upon her preferment ſhe forgets herſelf.

Mira. Come, Sir, will you endeavour to forget yourſelf——and transform into Sir Rowland.

Wait. Why, Sir, it will be impoſſible I ſhould remember myſelf——Marry'd, knighted, and attended, all in one day! 'Tis enough to make a man forget himſelf. 'The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance 'and familiarity with my former ſelf; and fall from my 'transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, 'I ſhan't be quite the ſame Waitwell neither,' and now I remember, I'm marry'd, and can't be my own man again.

Ay, there's my grief; that's the ſad change of life;
To loſe my title, and yet keep my wife.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE, *A room in* Lady Wiſhfort's *houſe.*

Lady Wiſhfort *at her toilet,* Peg *waiting.*

LADY WISHFORT.

MErciful! no news of Foible yet?

Peg. No, Madam.

Lady W. I have no more patience—If I have not fret-

ted myſelf till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, ſweetheart? An errant aſh-colour, as I'm a perſon. Look you how this wench ſtirs! Why doſt thou not fetch me a little red? Didſt thou not hear me, Mopus?

Peg. The red ratafia does your ladyſhip mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady W. Ratafia, fool! no, fool, not the ratafia, fool. Grant me patience! I mean the Spaniſh paper, ideot, complexion. Darling paint, paint, paint; doſt thou underſtand that, changeling, dangling thy hands, like bobbins, before thee? Why doſt thou not ſtir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wires!

Peg. Lord, Madam, your ladyſhip is ſo impatient!—I cannot come at the paint, Madam; Mrs. Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

Lady W. A pox take you both! Fetch me the cherry-brandy, then. [*Exit* Peg.

I'm as pale and as faint—I look like Mrs. Qualmſick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding. Wench, come, come, wench; what art thou doing; Sipping, taſting? Save thee, doſt thou not know the bottle?

Re-enter Peg, *with a bottle and China cup.*

Peg. Madam, I ſtaid to bring your ladyſhip a cup.

Lady W. A cup, ſave thee! and what a cup haſt thou brought? Doſt thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didſt thou not bring thy thimble? Haſt thou ne'er a braſs thimble clinking in thy pocket, with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill—So—again. See who that is. [*One knocks.*] Set down the bottle firſt. Here, here, under the table——What, wouldſt thou go with the bottle in thy hand, like a tapſter? As I'm a perſon, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before ſhe came to me, 'like Maritornes, 'the Aſturian, in Don Quixote.' No Foible yet?

Peg. No, Madam, Mrs. Marwood.

Lady W. Oh, Marwood! let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

Enter Mrs. Marwood.

Mrs. Mar. I'm ſurprized to find your ladyſhip in diſhabille at this time of day.

Lady W. Foible's a loſt thing; has been abroad ſince morning and never heard of ſince.

Mrs. Mar. I saw her but now, as I came mask'd through the Park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady W. With Mirabell! You call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negociate an affair, in which, if I'm detected, I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruin'd. Oh, my friend, I'm a wretch of wretches, if I'm detected!

Mrs. Mar. Oh, Madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

Lady W. Oh, he carries poison in his tongue, that would corrupt integrity itself! If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood! what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark! I hear her. Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom. You'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you. There are books over the chimney; Quarles and Pryn, and the Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's Works, to entertain you.—Go, you thing, and send her in. [*To* Peg.

Enter Foible.

Lady W. Oh, Foible! where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing?

Foib. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady W. But what hast thou done?

Foib. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamoured——so transported! Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—Poor Sir Rowland, I say.

Lady W. The miniature has been counted like. But hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell? What hadst thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foib. So, the devil has been beforehand with me. What shall I say?——Alas, Madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? Was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I am sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne; but he had a fling at your ladyship too; and then I could not hold: but, i'faith, I gave him his own.

Lady W.

Lady W. Me! What did the filthy fellow say?

Foib. Oh, Madam, 'tis a shame to say what he said!—With his taunts, and his sleers, tossing up his nose——Humph, (says he) what, are you hatching some plot, (says he) you are so early abroad? Or catering (says he) ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant. Half-pay is but thin subsistence (says he)—Well, what pension does your lady propose?—Let me see (says he)——what, she must come down pretty deep, now; she's superannuated, (says he) and———

Lady W. Ods my life! I'll have him—I'll have him murdered, I'll have him poisoned. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer, to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Locket's immediately.

Foib. Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, Madam, starve him; marry Sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. Oh, you would bless yourself to hear what he said!

Lady W. A villain! Superannuated!

Foib. Humph, (says he) I hear you are laying designs against me too, (says he) and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle; (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship) but (says he) I'll fit you for that, I warrant you (says he). I'll hamper you for that, (says he) and you and your old frippery too (says he). I'll handle you———

Lady W. Audacious villain! handle me! Would he durst—Frippery! old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouth'd fellow? I'll be marry'd to-morrow; I'll be contracted to-night.

Foib. The sooner the better, Madam.

Lady W. Will Sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? When, Foible?

Foib. Incontinently, Madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband, after knighthood, with that impatience with which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady W. Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags; a tatterdemalion. Yes, he shall have my niece, with her fortune, he shall.

Foib. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first,

and angle into Black Friars for braſs farthings, with an old mitten.

Lady W. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I ſhall never recompoſe my features to receive Sir Rowland with any œconomy of face. This wretch has fretted me, that I am abſolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

Foib. Your ladyſhip has frowned a little too raſhly, indeed, Madam. There are ſome cracks diſcernible in the white varniſh.

Lady W. Let me ſee the glaſs—Cracks, ſay'ſt thou? Why, I am errantly flead. I look like an old peel'd wall. Thou muſt repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes, or I ſhall never keep up to my picture.

Foib. I warrant you, Madam: a little art once made your picture like you; and now, a little of the ſame art muſt make you like your picture. Your picture muſt ſit for you, Madam.

Lady W. But art thou ſure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will he not fail when he does come; Will he be importunate, Foible, 'and puſh?' For if he ſhould not be importunate, I ſhall never break decorums. I ſhall die with confuſion, if I am forced to make advances. 'Oh, no, I can never advance. I ſhall ſwoon, if he ſhould 'expect advances.' No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the neceſſity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy, neither; I won't give him deſpair. But a little diſdain is not amiſs; a little ſcorn is alluring.

Foib. A little ſcorn becomes your ladyſhip.

Lady W. Yes, but tenderneſs becomes me beſt—A ſort of a dyingneſs. You ſee that picture has a ſort of a—— Ha, Foible! a ſwimmingneſs in the eyes——Yes, I'll look ſo——My niece affects it; but ſhe wants features. Is Sir Rowland handſome? Let my toilet be removed; I'll dreſs above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handſome? Don't anſwer me; I won't know; I'll be ſurpriſed; be taken by ſurpriſe.

Foib. By ſtorm, Madam. Sir Rowland's a briſk man.

Lady W. Is he? Oh, then, he'll importune, if he's a briſk man. I ſhall ſave decorums, if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehenſion of offending

offending againſt decorums. Oh, I'm glad he's a briſk man! Let my things be removed, good Foible. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs. Fainall.

Mrs. Fain Oh, Foible! I have been in a fright, leſt I ſhould come too late. That devil, Marwood, ſaw you in the Park with Mirabell, and, I'm afraid, will diſcover it to my Lady.

Foib. Diſcover what, Madam?

Mrs. Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that ſtrange face. I am privy to the whole deſign, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to perſonate Mirabell's uncle, and, as ſuch, winning my Lady, to involve her in thoſe difficulties from which Mirabell only muſt releaſe her, by his making his conditions to have my couſin and her fortune left to her own diſpoſal.

Foib. Oh, dear Madam, I beg your pardon! It was not my confidence in your ladyſhip that was deficient; but I thought the former good correſpondence between your ladyſhip and Mr. Mirabell, might have hindered his communicating this ſecret.

Mrs. Fain. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foib. Oh, dear Madam, Mr. Mirabell is ſuch a ſweet, winning gentleman! But your ladyſhip is the pattern of generoſity. Sweet lady, to be ſo good! Mr. Mirabell cannot chooſe but be grateful. I find your ladyſhip has his heart ſtill. Now, Madam, I can ſafely tell your ladyſhip our ſucceſs. Mrs. Marwood has told my Lady; but I warrant I managed myſelf. I turned it all for the better. I told my Lady, that Mr. Mirabell railed at her; I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my Lady is ſo incenſed, that ſhe'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, ſhe ſays. I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for aſking for, 'as they ſay of a Welch 'maidenhead.'

Mrs. Fain. Oh, rare Foible!

Foib. Madam, I beg your ladyſhip to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his ſucceſs. I would be ſeen as little as poſſible to ſpeak to him; beſides, I believe Madam Marwood watches me. She has a month's mind; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her—[*Calls.*]—John, remove my Lady's toilet. Madam, your ſervant. My Lady is ſo impatient, I fear ſhe'll come for me, if I ſtay.

Mrs.

Mrs. Fain. I'll go with you up the back ſtairs, leſt I ſhould meet her. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mrs. Marwood.

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, Mrs. Engine! is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I ſhall watch you. 'Why, this wench is the *paſs-par-* '*tout*, a very maſter-key to every body's ſtrong box.' My friend, Fainall, have you carried it ſo ſwimmingly? 'I thought there was ſomething in it: but it ſeems it's 'over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of 'appetite, then, but from a ſurfeit; elſe you could ne- 'ver be ſo cool to fall from a principal to be an aſſiſtant; 'to procure for him! a pattern of generoſity that, I con- 'feſs. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your 'match. Oh, man, man! woman, woman! The de- 'vil's an aſs. If I were a painter I would draw him like 'an ideot, a driveler, with bib and bells. Man ſhould 'have his head and horns, and woman the reſt of him. 'Poor ſimple fiend!'—Madam Marwood has a month's mind; but he can't abide her. 'Twere better for him you had not been his confeſſor in that affair, without you could have kept his counſel cloſer. 'I ſhall not prove 'another pattern of generoſity. He has not obliged me 'with thoſe exceſſes of himſelf; and now I'll have none 'of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with 'a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any 'chymiſt upon the day of projection.

'*Enter Lady* Wiſhfort.

'*Lady W.* Oh, dear Marwood! what ſhall I ſay for 'this rude forgetfulneſs? But my dear friend is all 'goodneſs.

'*Mrs. Mar.* No apologies, dear Madam; I have been 'very well entertained.

'*Lady W.* As I'm a perſon, I am in a very chaos, to 'think I ſhould ſo forget myſelf; but I have ſuch an olio 'of affairs, really I know not what to do——[*Calls.*]—— 'Foible!——I expect my nephew, Sir Wilfull, every 'moment, too——Why, Foible!——He means to tra- 'vel for improvement.

'*Mrs. Mar.* Methinks Sir Wilfull ſhould rather think 'of marrying than travelling, at his years. I hear he is 'turned of forty.

'*Lady*

'*Lady W.* Oh, he's in leſs danger of being ſpoiled by 'his travels. I am againſt my nephew's marrying too 'young. It will be time enough when he comes back, 'and has acquired diſcretion to chooſe for himſelf.

'*Mrs. Mar.* Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would 'make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very uſual with young gentlemen.

'*Lady W.* I promiſe you, I have thought on't; and 'ſince 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I aſſure 'you, I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my 'word, I'll propoſe it.

'*Enter* Foible.

'Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be 'here before dinner—I muſt make haſte.

'*Foib.* Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to 'dine with your ladyſhip.

'*Lady W.* Oh, dear! I can't appear till I'm dreſs'd. 'Dear Marwood, ſhall I be free with you again, and beg 'you to entertain them? I'll make all imaginable haſte. 'Dear friend, excuſe me. [*Ex.* Foible *and Lady* W.'

Enter Mrs. Millamant *and* Mincing.

Milla. Sure never any thing was ſo unbred as that odious man——Marwood, your ſervant.

Mrs. Mar. You have a colour; what's the matter?

Milla. That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame——I have broke my fan——Mincing, lend me yours. Is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mrs. Mar. No. What has he done?

Milla. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked —Nay, he has ſaid nothing, neither; but he has contradicted every thing that has been ſaid. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrelled.

Minc. I vow, Mem, I thought once they would have fit.

Milla. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I ſwear, that one has not the liberty of chooſing one's acquaintance, as one does one's cloaths.

'*Mrs. Mar.* If we had that liberty, we ſhould be as 'weary of one ſet of acquaintance, tho' never ſo good, 'as we are of one ſuit, tho' never ſo fine: a fool and a 'doily ſtuff would now and then find days of grace, and 'be worn for variety.

'*Milla.* I could conſent to wear them, if they would

'wear

'wear alike; but fools never wear out—They are such 'drap-de-berry things! Without one could give them to 'one's chambermaid, after a day or two.'

Mrs. Mar. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think 'you of the play-house? A fine, gay, glossy fool should 'be given there, like a new masking habit after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise; 'for a fool's visit is always a disguise, and never admitted 'by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover 'of sense.' If you would but appear barefaced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud, as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time; for the town has found it: 'the secret is grown too big 'for the pretence: 'tis like Mrs. Primley's great belly; 'she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her 'hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it, 'than my Lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face, 'which, in defiance to her Rhenish-wine tea, will not be 'comprehended in a mask.'

Milla. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are more censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast—Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing here. Their folly is less provoking than your malice. [*Exit* Minc.

The town has found it! What has found it? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret, than it is a secret that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

Mrs. Mar. You are nettled.

Milla. You are mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Milla. Oh, filly! Ha, ha, ha! I could laugh immoderaly. Poor Mirabell! his constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoin'd it him to be so coy. If I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to shew more gallantry. 'Tis hardly well bred, to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail; so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha! Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh; ha,

ha, ha, ha! tho', I grant you, 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha!

'*Mrs. Mar.* What pity 'tis, ſo much raillery, and de-
'livered with ſo ſignificant geſture, ſhould be ſo unhappi-
'ly directed to miſcarry!

'*Milla.* Ha! dear creature, I aſk your pardon; I
'ſwear, I did not mind you.'

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impoſſible, when I ſhall tell him by telling you——

Milla. Oh, dear! what? For it is the ſame thing if I hear it. Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Mar. That I deteſt him, hate him, Madam.

Milla. Oh, Madam! why, ſo do I. And yet the creature loves me, ha, ha, ha! How can one forbear laughing to think of it? I am a Sybil, if I am not amazed to think what he can ſee in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handſomer, and within a year or two as young. If you could but ſtay for me, I ſhould overtake you—But that cannot be—Well, that thought makes me melancholic—Now I'll be ſad.

Mrs. Mar. Your merry note may be changed ſooner than you think.

Milla. D'ye ſay ſo? 'Then I'm reſolved I'll have a
'ſong, to keep up my ſpirits.'—*But here come the gentlemen.*

'*Enter* Mincing.

'*Minc.* The gentlemen ſtay but to comb, Madam;
'and will wait on you.

'*Milla.* Deſire Mrs. ——, that is in the next room, to
'ſing the ſong I would have learnt yeſterday——You
'ſhall hear it, Madam—Not that there's any great mat-
'ter in it; but 'tis agreeable to my humour.

'SONG.

'Love's but the frailty of the mind,
'When 'tis not with ambition join'd;
'A ſickly flame, which, if not fed, expires;
'And feeding, waſtes in ſelf-conſuming fires.

'T'is not to wound a wanton boy
'Or am'rous youth, that gives the joy;
'But 'tis the glory to have pierc'd a ſwain,
'For whom inferior beauties ſigh'd in vain.

'Then

' Then I alone the conqueſt prize,
' When I inſult a rival's eyes :
' If there's delight in love, 'tis when I ſee
' That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.

Enter Petulant *and* Witwoud.

Milla. Is your animoſity compos'd, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, Madam; we have no animoſity—We hit off a little wit now and then, but no animoſity—The falling out of wits is like the falling out of lovers———We agree in the main, like treble and baſe. Ha, Petulant?

Pet. Ay, in the main——But when I have a humour to contradict———

Wit. Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battle-dores: for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

Pet. If he ſays black's black—if I have a humour to ſay 'tis blue——Let that paſs——All's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it muſt be granted.

Wit. Not poſitively muſt———But it may———may.

Pet. Yes, it poſitively muſt, upon proof poſitive.

Wit. Ay, upon proof poſitive it muſt; but upon proof preſumptive it only may. That's a logical diſtinction now, Madam.

Mrs. Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I aſſert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs. Mar. That's a ſign indeed 'tis no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no; 'tis no enemy to any body, but them that have it.

Milla. Well, an illiterate man's my averſion: I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man, to offer to make love.

Wit. That I confeſs I wonder at too.

Milla. Ah! to marry an ignorant! that can hardly read or write.

Pet.

Pet. Why ſhould a man be any farther from being married, tho' he can't read, than he is from being hang'd. The ordinary's paid for ſetting the pſalm, and the pariſh-prieſt for reading the ceremony. And for the reſt which is to follow in both caſes, a man may do it without book———So all's one for that.

Milla. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company, I'll be gone. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir Wilfull Witwoud, *in a riding-dreſs, and a Footman.*

Wit. In the name of Bartholomew and his fair, what have we here?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I———Yes, I think it is he———I've almoſt forgot him; I have not ſeen him ſince the coronation.

Foot. Sir, my lady's dreſſing. Here's company; if you pleaſe to walk in, in the mean time.

Sir Wil. Dreſſing! What, 'tis but morning here, I warrant, with you in London: we ſhou'd count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropſhire———Why then belike my aunt han't din'd yet———Ha, friend!

Foot. Your aunt, Sir?

Sir Wil. My aunt, Sir! yes, my aunt, Sir, and your lady, Sir; your lady is my aunt, Sir—Why, what doſt thou not know me, friend? Why then ſend ſome body hither that does. How long haſt thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

Foot. A week, Sir; longer than any body in the houſe, except my lady's woman.

Sir Wil. Why then belike thou doſt not know thy lady, if thou ſeeſt her, ha, friend?

Foot. Why truly, Sir, I cannot ſafely ſwear to her face in the morning, before ſhe is dreſs'd; 'Tis like I may give a ſhrewd gueſs at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, pr'ythee try what thou canſt do, if thou canſt not gueſs, enquire her out, doſt hear, fellow? And tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the houſe.

Foot. I ſhall, Sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye, hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear; pr'ythee who are theſe gallants?

Foot. Really, Sir, I can't tell; here come ſo many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all. [*Exit.*

Sir Wil. Oons this fellow knows leſs than a ſtarling; I don't think a'knows his own name.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behindhand in forgetfulneſs—I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope ſo——The devil take him that remembers firſt, I ſay.

Sir Wil. Save you, gentlemen and lady.

Mrs. Mar. For ſhame, Mr. Witwoud: why won't you ſpeak to him?——And you, Sir.

Wit. Petulant, ſpeak.

Pet. And you, Sir.

Sir Wil. No offence, I hope. [*Salutes* Marwood.

Mrs. Mar. No ſure, Sir.

Wit. This is a vile dog, I ſee that already. No offence! Ha, ha, ha! to him; to him, Petulant; ſmoke, him.

Pet. It ſeems as if you had come a journey, Sir; hem, hem. [*Surveying him round.*

Sir Wil. Very likely, Sir, that it may ſeem ſo.

Pet. No offence, I hope, Sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots: Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Wil. May be not, Sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, Sir.

Pet. Sir, I preſume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, Sir: if you are not ſatisfy'd with the information of my boots, Sir, if you will ſtep to the ſtable, you may enquire further of my horſe, Sir.

Pet. Your horſe, Sir! Your horſe is an aſs, Sir?

Sir Wil. Do you ſpeak by way of offence, Sir?

Mrs. Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, Sir—S'life we ſhall have a quarrel betwixt an horſe and an aſs, before they find one another out. [*Aſide.*] You muſt not take any thing amiſs from your friends, Sir. You are among your friends here, though it may be you don't know it—If I am not miſtaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Right, Lady; I am Sir Wilfull Witwoud; ſo

so I write myself; no offence to any body, I hope; and nephew to the lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mrs. Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, Sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! What, sure 'tis not——Yea, by'r lady, but 'tis—'Sheart I know not whether 'tis or no—Yea, but 'tis, by the Wrekin. Brother Antony! what Tony, i'faith! What dost thou not know me? By'r lady nor I thee, thou art so becravatted, and so beperiwig'd——— 'Sheart why dost not speak? Art thou overjoy'd?

Wit. Odso, brother, is it you? Your servant, brother.

Sir Wil. Your servant! Why yours, Sir. Your servant again—'Sheart, and your friend and servant to that —And a— [*pugh*] and flap dragon for your service, Sir: and a hare's foot, and a hare's scut for your service, Sir? an you be so cold and so courtly!

Wit. No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, Sir, but there is, and much offence —A pox! is this your inns o'court-breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Wit. Why, brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of serjeants—'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wil. The fashion's a fool, and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this—By'r lady I conjectur'd you were a fop, since you began to change the stile of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a Subpœna. I might expect this when you left off, Honoured brother; and hoping you are in good health, and so forth—To begin with a, Ratsme, knight, I'm so sick of last night's debauch, —Ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude ——— You could write news before you were out of your time, when you liv'd with honest Pumple-nose the attorney of Furnival's Inn——You cou'd intreat to be remember'd then to your friends round the Wrekin. We could have

Gazettes then, and Dawk's letter, and the weekly bill, 'till of late days.

Pet. 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? Of the family of the Furnivals. Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Ay, ay, but that was but for a while. Not long, not long. Pfhaw, I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian. Ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that, man, to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have serv'd your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs. Mar. You intend to travel, Sir, as I'm inform'd.

Sir Wil. Belike I may, Madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask licence of you, Sir; nor the weather-cock your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, Sir; 'tis like my aunt may have told you, Madam——Yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts. If an how the peace holds, whereby that is taxes abate.

Mrs. Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution—because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand, shill I shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your Lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have spice of your French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs. Mar. Here's an academy in town for that use.

Sir Wil. Is there? 'Tis like there may.

Mrs. Mar. No doubt you will return very much improv'd.

Wit. Yes, refin'd like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

Enter

Enter ' Lady Wiſhfort *and*' Fainall.

' *Lady W.* Nephew, you are welcome.

' *Sir Wil.* Aunt, your ſervant.

' *Fain.* Sir Wilfull, your moſt faithful ſervant.

' *Sir Wil.* Couſin Fainall, give me your hand.

' *Lady W.* Couſin Witwoud, your ſervant; Mr. Petulant, your ſervant—Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink any thing after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almoſt ready.

' *Sir Wil.* I'm very well, I thank you, aunt—However, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart I was afraid you wou'd have been in the faſhion too, and have remember'd to have forgot your relations. ' Here's your couſin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.

' *Lady W.* O he's a railer, nephew—My couſin's a wit: and your great wits always rally their beſt friends to chooſe. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll underſtand raillery better.

' [Fain. *and* Mrs. Marwood *talks apart.*

' *Sir Wil.* Why then let him hold his tongue in the mean time, and rail when that day comes.'

Enter Mincing.

Minc. Gentlemen, I come to acquaint you that dinner is impatient, and my lady waits.

Sir Wil. Impatient! Why then belike it won't ſtay 'till I pull off my boots. Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of ſlippers?——My man's with his horſes, I warrant.

Mincing. Fy, fy, Sir, you wou'd not pull off your boots here; you muſt go down into the hall.

' *Lady W.* Dinner ſhall ſtay for you. My nephew's little unbred, you'll pardon him. Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?'

Mrs. Mar. I'll follow you, Madam, before Sir Wilfull is ready. [*Exeunt.*

Fain. Why then Foible's a bawd, an errant, rank, match-making bawd. And I, it ſeems, I am a huſband, a rank-huſband; and my wife a very errant, rank-wife,—all in the Way of the World. 'Sdeath, to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embryo! ' Sure I was born with budding antlers, like a young ſatyr, or a citizen's child.'

'child.' 'Sdeath to be out-witted, to be out-jilted—— out-matrimony'd——If I had kept my ſpeed like a ſtag, 'twere ſomewhat——but to crawl after, with my horns like a ſnail, and be out-ſtripp'd by my wife——'tis ſcurvy wedlock.

Mrs. Mar. Then ſhake it off, you have often wiſh'd for an opportunity to part;—and now you have it. But firſt prevent their plot——the half of Millamant's fortune is too conſiderable to be parted with to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Damn him, that had been mine——had you not made that fond diſcovery——That had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added luſtre to my horns, by that increaſe of fortune; I cou'd have worn 'em tipt with gold, tho' my forehead had been furniſh'd like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

Mrs. Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you ſtill, if you can away with your wife; 'and ſhe's 'no worſe than when you had her. I dare ſwear ſhe had 'given up her game before ſhe was married.

'*Fain.* Hum!—That may be.

'*Mrs. Mar.* You married her to keep you; and if you 'can contrive to have her keep you better than you ex-'pected, why ſhould you not keep her longer than you 'intended.'

Fain. The means! the means!

Mrs. Mar. Diſcover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her——My lady loves her, and will come to any compoſition to ſave her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, juſt upon the diſcovery of this impoſture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and ſacrifice niece, and fortune, and all at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if ſhe ſhould flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. Faith, this has an appearance.

Mrs. Mar. I'm ſorry I hinted to my lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull, that may be an obſtacle.

Fain. Oh, for that matter, leave me to manage him; I'll diſable him for that. He will drink like a Dane: after dinner, I'll ſet his hand in.

Mrs.

'*Mrs. Mar.* Well, how do you ſtand affected towards
'the lady?

'*Fain.* Why faith, I'm thinking of it—Let me ſee—
'I am married already, ſo that's over—My wife has
'played the jade with me—Well, that's over too—I
'never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been
'over too by this time—Jealous of her I cannot be, for
'I am certain; ſo there's an end of jealouſy—Weary
'of her I am, and ſhall be—No, there's no end of that;
'no, no, that were too much to hope—Thus far con-
'cerning my repoſe—Now for my reputation—As to
'my own, I married not for it; ſo that's out of the
'queſtion—And as to my part in my wife's—Why, ſhe
'had parted with her's before; ſo bringing none to me,
'ſhe can take none from me; 'tis againſt all rule of
'play, that I ſhould loſe to one who has not where-
'withal to ſtake.

'*Mrs. Mar.* Beſides, you forget; marriage is ho-
'nourable.

'*Fain.* Hum! faith, and that's well thought on;
'marriage is honourable, as you ſay; and if ſo, where-
'fore ſhould cuckoldom be a diſcredit, being derived
'from ſo honourable a root?

'*Mrs. Mar.* Nay, I know not; if the root be honour-
'able, why not the branches?

'*Fain.* So, ſo; why this point's clear'—Well, how
do we proceed?

Mrs. Mar. I will contrive a letter, which ſhall be de-
livered to my lady at the time when that raſcal, who is
to act Sir Rowland, is with her. It ſhall come as from
an unknown hand——for the leſs I appear to know of
the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Beſides,
I would not have Foible provoked, if I could help it——
becauſe you know ſhe knows ſome paſſages——Nay, I
expect all will come out——But let the mine be ſprung
firſt, and then I care not if I am diſcovered.

Fain. If the worſt come to the worſt—I'll turn my
wife to graſs—I have already a deed of ſettlement of the
beſt part of her eſtate; which I wheedled out of her;
and that you ſhall partake at leaſt.

Mrs. Mar. I hope you are convinced that I hate Mira-
bell now: you'll be no more jealous?

Fain. Jealous, no——by this kiſs——let huſbands be jealous; but let the lover ſtill believe; 'or, if he doubt, 'let it be only to endear his pleaſure, and prepare the 'joy that follows, when he proves his miſtreſs true: but 'let huſband's doubts convert to endleſs jealouſy; or, if 'they have belief, let it corrupt to ſuperſtition, and blind 'credulity;' I am ſingle, and will herd no more with them. True, I wear the badge, but I'll diſown the order. And ſince I take my leave of them, I care not if I leave them a common motto to their common creſt.

All huſbands muſt, or pain, or ſhame, endure;
The wiſe too jealous are, fools too ſecure.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE *continues.*

Lady Wiſhfort *and* Foible.

Lady Wishfort.

IS Sir Rowland coming, ſay'ſt thou, Foible? and are things in order?

Foib. Yes, Madam. I have put wax lights in the ſconces; and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their beſt liveries, with the coachman and poſtillion to fill up the equipage.

Lady W. Have you pulvilled the coachman and poſtillion, that they may not ſtink of the ſtable, when Sir Rowland comes by?

Foib. Yes, Madam.

'*Lady W.* And are the dancers and the muſic ready, 'that he may be entertained in all points with corre-'ſpondence to his paſſion?

'*Foi.* All is ready, Ma'am.'

Lady W. And——well——and how do I look, Foible?

Foi. Moſt killing well, Madam.

Lady W. Well, and how ſhall I receive him? In what figure ſhall I give his heart the firſt impreſſion? There is a great deal in the firſt impreſſion. Shall I ſit?——No, I won't ſit——I'll walk——ay, I'll walk from the door upon

upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—— No, that will be too ſudden—I'll lie, ay, I'll lie down —I'll receive him in my little dreſſing-room, there's a couch——Yes, yes, I'll give the firſt impreſſion on a couch——I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow; with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way——Yes——and then as ſoon as he appears, ſtart; ay, ſtart, and be ſurpriſed, and riſe to meet him in a pretty diſorder——Yes——Oh, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in ſome confuſion ——It ſhews the foot to advantage, and furniſhes with bluſhes, and recompoſing airs beyond compariſon. Hark! There's a coach.

Foib. 'Tis he, Madam.

Lady W. Oh, dear, has my nephew made his addreſſes to Millamant? I ordered him.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is ſet in to drinking, Madam, in the parlour.

Lady W. Od's my life, I'll ſend him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll ſend him as I go. When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland.

[*Exit Lady* W.

Enter Mrs. Millamant *and Mrs.* Fainall.

Foib. Madam, I ſtayed here, to tell your ladyſhip that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportunity to talk with you. Though my lady's orders were to leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leiſure?

Milla. No——What would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuſe myſelf——Bid him come another time.

There never yet was woman made,
Nor ſhall, but to be curs'd.

[*Repeating and walking about.*

That's hard!

Mrs. Fain. You are very fond of Sir Jack Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Milla. He? Ay, and filthy verſes——So I am.

Foib. Sir Wilfull is coming, Madam. Shall I ſend Mr. Mirabell away?

Milla. Ay, if you pleaſe, Foible, ſend him away——

Or

Or send him hither——just as you will, dear Foible——I think I'll see him—Shall I? Ay, let the wretch come.

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train. [*Repeating.* Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull——Thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool; thou art married and hast patience——I would confer with my own thoughts.

Mrs. Fain. I am obliged to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

Enter Sir Wilfull.

Mrs. Fain. Oh, Sir Wilfull; you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point, now or never.

Sir Wil. Yes; my aunt will have it so——I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I'm acquainted: [*This while* Millamant *walks about repeating to herself.*]——But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance—So for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave——If so be, you'll be so kind to make my excuse; I'll return to my company——

Mrs. Fain. Oh, fy, Sir Wilfull? What, you must not be daunted

Sir Wil. Daunted! No, that's not it; it is not so much for that—for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient 'till further acquaintance, that's all——your servant.

Mrs. Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door. [*Exit* Fain.

Sir Wil. Nay, nay, cousin—I have forgot my gloves—What d'ye do? 'Sheart a'has locked the door indeed, I think——Nay, cousin Fainall, open the door——Psha! what a vixen trick is this?——Nay, now a'has seen me too—Cousin, I made bold to pass through as it were——I think this door's inchanted——

Milla. [*Repeating.*]

I pr'ythee spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wil. Anan? Cousin, your servant.

Milla. That foolish trifle of a heart—Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Yes——your servant. No offence, I hope, cousin.

Milla.

Milla. [*Repeating.*]

I ſwear it will do its part,

Tho' thou doſt thine, employ'ſt thy power and art.
Natural, eaſy Suckling!

Sir Wil. Anan! Suckling! No ſuch ſuckling neither, couſin, nor ſtripling: I thank Heaven, I'm no minor.

Milla. Ah, ruſtic, ruder than Gothic.

Sir Wil. Well, well, I ſhall underſtand your Lingo one of theſe days, couſin; in the mean while I muſt anſwer in plain Engliſh.

Milla. Have you any buſineſs with me, Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Not at preſent, couſin——Yes, I made bold to ſee, to come and know, if that how you were diſpoſed to fetch a walk this evening, if ſo be that I might not be troubleſome, I would have fought a walk with you.

Milla. A walk? What then?

Sir Wil. Nay, nothing——Only for the walk's ſake, that's all——

Milla. I naufeate walking; 'tis a country diverſion; I loathe the country, and every thing that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may——Here are choice of paſtimes here in town, as plays and the like, that muſt be confeſſed indeed——

Milla. Ah, l'etourdie! I hate the town too.

Sir Wil. Dear heart, that's much——Hah! that you ſhould hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may; there are ſome can't reliſh the town, and others can't away with the country—'tis like you may be one of thoſe, couſin.

Milla. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may—You have nothing further to ſay to me?

Sir Wil. Not at preſent, couſin——'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private—I may break my mind in ſome meaſure——I conjecture you partly gueſs——However, that's as time ſhall try——But ſpare to ſpeak and ſpare to ſpeed, as they ſay.

Milla. If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me: I have juſt now a little buſineſs.—

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, couſin: yes, yes, all a caſe——When you're diſpoſed, when you're diſpoſed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now.

All's one for that—Yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haſte; it will keep cold as they ſay—Couſin, your ſervant——I think this door's locked.

Milla. You may go this way, Sir.

Sir Wil. Your ſervant, then with your leave I'll return to my company.

Milla. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit Sir* Wil.

Like Phœbus ſung the no leſs am'rous boy.

Enter Mirabell.

Mira.—Like Daphne ſhe, as lovely and as coy. Do you lock yourſelf up from me, to make my ſearch more curious? Or, is this pretty artifice contrived, to ſignify that here the chace muſt end, and my purſuit be crowned, for you can fly no farther?——

Milla. Vanity! No——I'll fly and be followed to the laſt moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you ſhould ſolicit me as much as if I were wavering at the gate of a monaſtery, with one foot over the threſhold. I'll be ſolicited to the very laſt, nay, and afterwards.

Mira. What, after the laſt?

Milla. 'Oh, if I ſhould think I was poor, and had no-'thing to beſtow, if I were reduced to an inglorious 'eaſe, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of ſolicita-'tion.

'*Mir.* But don't you know, that when favours are 'conferred upon inſtant and tedious ſolicitation, that 'they diminiſh in their value, and that both the giver 'loſes the grace, and the receiver leſſens his pleaſure.

'*Milla.* It may be in things of common application; 'but never ſure in love'—Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his miſtreſs. There is not ſo impudent a thing in nature, as the ſaucy look of an aſſured man, confident of ſucceſs. The pedantic arrogance of a very huſband has not ſo pragmatical an air. Ah, I'll never marry, unleſs I am firſt made ſure of my will and plea-ſure.

Mira. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the firſt now, and ſtay for the other 'till after grace?

Milla. Ah! don't be impertinent——My dear li-berty,

berty, ſhould I leave thee? My faithful ſolitude, my darling contemplation, muſt I bid you then adieu? Ah! adieu—My morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent ſlumbers, ye *douceurs*, ye *ſommeils du matin* adieu.—I can't doubt, 'tis more than impoſſible——Poſitively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I pleaſe.

Mira. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I pleaſe.

Milla. Ay! idle creature, get up when you will——And, d'ye hear, I won't be call'd names after I'm married, poſitively I won't be called names.

Mira. Names!

Milla. Ay; as wife, ſpouſe, my dear, joy, jewel, love, ſweet-heart, and the reſt of that naufeous cant, in which men and their wives are ſo fulſomely familiar—I ſhall never bear that——Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiſs before folks, like my lady Faddle and Sir Francis: nor go to Hyde Park together the firſt Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whiſpers, and then never be ſeen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the firſt week, and aſhamed of one another ever after. Let us never viſit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very ſtrange and well-bred: let us be as ſtrange as if we had been married a great while; and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

Mir. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reaſonable.

Milla. Trifles—As liberty to pay and receive viſits to and from whom I pleaſe; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I pleaſe; and chooſe converſation with regard only to my own taſte; to have no obligation upon me to converſe with wits that I don't like, becauſe they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, becauſe they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I pleaſe; dine in my dreſſing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reaſon. To have my cloſet inviolate; to be ſole empreſs of my tea-table, which you muſt never preſume to approach without firſt aſking leave. And laſtly, wherever I am, you ſhall always knock at the door before you come in. Theſe articles ſub-

ſcribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

Mira. Your bill of fare is ſomething advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions ——That when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond meaſure enlarged into a huſband.

Milla. You have free leave; propoſe your utmoſt, ſpeak and ſpare not.

Mira. I thank you. *Imprimis* then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no ſworn confident, or intimate of your own ſex; 'no ſhe friend 'to ſkreen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt 'you to make trial of a mutual ſecrecy;' no decoy-duck to wheedle you a fop-ſcrambling to the play in a maſk——Then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you ſhall be found out——And rail at me for miſſing the play, and diſappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my conſtancy.

Milla. Deteſtable *imprimis!* I go to the play in a maſk!

Mira. Item, I article, that you continue to like your own face, as long as I ſhall: and while it paſſes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all the vizards for the day, I prohibit all maſks for the night, made of oiled ſkins, and I know not what——Hogs bones, hare's gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roaſted cat. *Item*, I ſhut my doors againſt all bawds with baſkets, and penny-worths of muſlin, china, fans, Atlaſſes, &c.——*Item*, when you ſhall be breeding———

Milla. Ah, name it not.

Mira. Which may be preſumed, with a bleſſing on our endeavours ———

Milla. Odious endeavours!

Mira. I denounce againſt all ſtraight lacing, ſqueezing for a ſhape, till you mould my boy's head like a ſugar-loaf; and inſtead of a man child make me father to a crooked-brat. Laſtly, to the dominion of the tea table I ſubmit——But with proviſo, that you exceed not in your province: but reſtrain yourſelf to native and ſimple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewiſe to genuine and authorized tea-table talk—Such as mending

mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth——But that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea table, as orange brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of clary.——But for cowslip wine, poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow—These proviso's admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Milla. Oh, horrid proviso's! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows! Odious men! I hate your odious proviso's.

Mira. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Enter Mrs. Fainall.

Milla. Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs. Fain. Ay, ay, take him, take him; what should you do?

Milla. Well then——I'll take my death, I'm in a horrid fright——Fainall, I shall never say it——Well——I think——I'll endure you.

Mrs. Fain. Fy, fy, have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Milla. Are you? I think I have——and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too——Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you——I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked——Here, kiss my hand though——So, hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

Mrs. Fain. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience;——'You have neither time to talk nor stay: 'my mother is coming; and in my conscience, if she 'should see you, would fall into fits, and may be not 'recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland, who 'as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed.' Therefore spare you extasies for another occasion, and slip down the back stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Milla. Ay, ay, go. In the mean time I'll suppose you have said something to please me.

Mira. I am all obedience. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Fain. Yonder Sir Wilfull's drunk, and so noisy, that my mother has been forced to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking——What they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Milla. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing——for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. Fain. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you.——If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

Milla. How can you name that superannuated lubber? Foh!

Enter Witwoud *from drinking.*

Mrs. Fain. So, is the fray made up, that you have left them?

Wit. Left them! I could stay no longer——I have laughed like ten christenings—I am tipsy with laughing ——If I had staid any longer I should have burst —— I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unsized camblet——Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi*, and stopped the proceedings.

Milla. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage, and so fell a sputtering at one another like two roasting apples.

Enter Petulant *drunk.*

Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well. Gad, my head begins to whim it about——Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet. Look you, Mrs. Millamant——if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—— Pass on, or pass off——that's all.

Wit. Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

Pet. Witwoud——You are an annihilator of sense.

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions——

Thou

Thou art, in truth, (metaphorically ſpeaking) a ſpeaker of ſhort hand.

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) juſt one half of an aſs, and Baldwin yonder, thy half brother, is the reſt—A Gemini of aſſes ſplit wou'd make juſt four of you.

Wit. Thou doſt bite, my dear muſtard-ſeed; kiſs me for that.

Pet. Stand off——I'll kiſs no more males——I have kiſs'd your twin yonder in a humour of reconciliation, till he *(hiccups)* riſes upon my ſtomach like a raddiſh.

Milla. Eh! filthy creature—What was the quarrel?

Pet. There was no quarrel——There might have been a quarrel.

Wit. If there had been words enow between 'em to have expreſs'd provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of caſtanets.

Pet. You were the quarrel.

Milla. Me!

Pet. If I have a humour to quarrel, I can make leſs matters conclude premiſes—If you are not handſome, what then; if I have a humour to prove it? If I ſhall have my reward, ſay ſo; if not, fight for your face the next time yourſelf——I'll go ſleep.

Wit. Do, wrap thyſelf up like a wood-louſe, and dream revenge——And, hear me, if thou canſt learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge——I'll carry it for thee.

Pet. Carry your miſtreſs's monkey a ſpider——go flea dogs, and read romances—I'll go to bed to my maid.

Mrs. Fain. He's horridly drunk——How came you all in this pickle?

Wit. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight——Your huſband's advice, but he ſneak'd off.

Enter Sir Wilfull *drunk*; *and* Lady Wiſhfort.

Lady W. Out upon't! out upon't! at years of diſcretion, and comport yourſelf at this rantipole rate.

Sir Wil. No offence, aunt.

Lady W. Offence! As I'm a perſon, I'm aſham'd of you——Fough! how you ſtink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure ſuch a Borachio! you're an abſolute Borachio!

Sir Wil. Borachio!

Lady W. At a time when you ſhou'd commence an amour, and put your beſt foot foremoſt———

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, an you grudge me your liquor, make a bill——— Give me more drink, and take my purſe.

SONG.

Pry'thee fill me the glaſs
'Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a laſs
Is an ignorant aſs,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you wou'd have me marry my couſin——Say the word, and I'll do't—— Wilfull will do't, that's the word ———Wilfull will do't, that's my creſt——— my motto I have forgot.

Lady W. My nephew's a little overtaken, couſin—but 'tis with drinking your health———O' my word you are oblig'd to him.

Sir Wil. In vino veritas, aunt:——— If I drink your health to-day, couſin—I am a Borachio. But if you have a mind to be married, ſay the word, and ſend for the piper; Wilfull will do't. If not, duſt it away, and let's have t'other round——Tony! Ods heart where's Tony?—Tony's an honeſt fellow, but he ſpits after a bumper, and that's a fault.

Sings. We'll drink and we'll never have done, boys,
Put the glaſs then around with the ſun, boys,
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk ev'ry night,
And that makes him ſo bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The ſun's a good pimple, an honeſt ſoaker, he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at the Antipodes—your Antipodes are a good raſcally ſort of topſy-turvy fellows—If I had a bumper I'd ſtand upon my head and drink a health to 'em—A match or no match, couſin, with the hard name—Aunt, Wilfull will do't. 'If ſhe has her maidenhead, let her

'look

'look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own coun-
'sel in the mean time, and cry out at the nine month's
'end.'

Milla. Your pardon, Madam, I can stay no longer—Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt* Milla. *and* Mrs. Fain.

Lady W. Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature! I know not what to do with him.—Travel, quotha! ay, travel, travel, get thee gone; get thee but far enough; to the Saracens or the Tartars, or the Turks, for thou are't not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly Pagan.

Sir Wil. Turks! no, no, Turks, aunt; your Turks are Infidels, and believe not in the grape; your Mahometan, your Mussulman is a dry stinkard—No offence, aunt. My map says, that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian. I cannot find by the map, that your Mufti is orthodox; whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and *(hiccups)* Greek for claret.

Sings. To drink is a Christian diversion
Unknown to the Turk and the Persian;
Let Mahometan fools
Live by Heathenish rules,
And be damn'd over tea-cups and coffee.
But let British lads sing
Crown a health to the King,
And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

Ah, Tony!

[*Enter* Foible *and whispers* Lady Wishfort.

Lady W. Sir Rowland impatient! Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbril?——Go lie down and sleep, you sot—Or, as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinado'd with broom-sticks. Call up the wenches with broom-sticks.

Sir Wil. Ahey! wenches: where are the wenches?

Lady W. Dear cousin Witwoud: get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation——— You will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit.

Wit. Come, knight—— Pox on him, I don't know what to say to him——Will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wit. With a wench, Tony? Is she a shake-bag, sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! he has a breath like a bagpipe—Ay, ey, come, will you march, my Salopian?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony—— I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony. Sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy Pig.

——And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

[*Exeunt* Sir Wil. *and* Wit.

Lady W. This will never do. It will never make a match:—at least before he has been abroad.

Enter Waitwell *disguis'd as for* Sir Rowland.

Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness—I have more pardons to ask than the Pope distributes in the year of Jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an alliance—we may unbend the severity of decorum—and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, Madam, is the effect of my transport — And till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantaliz'd on the rack; and do but hang, Madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady W. You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion, with a most prevailing vehemence.—But a day or two for decency of marriage——

Wait. For decency of funeral, Madam. The delay will break my heart——or, if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me—— and I would willingly starve him before I die——I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction——That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be reveng'd on that unnatural viper.

Lady W. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly, I would contribute much both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge——Not that I respect myself; tho' he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady W.

Lady W. O Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has ſhed, the oaths that he has ſworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and the tremblings, the ardours and the extaſies, the kneelings and the riſings, the heart-heavings and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his proteſting eyes! Oh, no memory can regiſter.

Wait. What, my rival! Is the rebel my rival? a' dies.

Lady W. No don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland, ſtarve him gradually inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he ſhall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms——He ſhall ſtarve upward and upward, 'till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a ſtink like a candle's end upon a ſave-all.

Lady W. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way—— You are no novice in the labyrinth of love—You have the clue——But as I am a perſon, Sir Rowland, you muſt not attribute my yielding to any ſiniſter appetite ——I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials.

Wait. Far be it from me——

Lady W. If you do, I proteſt I muſt recede——or think that I have made a proſtitution of decorum; but in the vehemence of compaſſion, and to ſave the life of a perſon of ſo much importance.

Wait. I eſteem it ſo.

Lady W. Or elſe you wrong my condeſcenſion.——

Wait. I do not, I do not ————

Lady W. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair ſhrine of virtue.

Lady W. If thou think the leaſt ſcruple of carnality was an ingredient————

Wait. Dear Madam, No. You are all camphire and frankincenſe, all chaſtity and odour.

Lady W. Or that————

Enter Foible.

Foib. Madam, 'The dancers are ready, and' there's one with a letter, who muſt deliver it into your own hands.

Lady W.

Lady W. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a perſon who would ſuffer racks in honour's cauſe, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you inceſſantly.

[*Exit* Lady W.

Wait. Fy, fy!—What a ſlavery have I undergone? ſpouſe, haſt thou any cordial? I want ſpirits.

Foib. What a waſhy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and ſwearing to a fine lady?

Wait. O, ſhe is the antidote to deſire. 'Spouſe, thou 'wilt fare the worſe for't——I ſhall have no appetite to 'iteration of nuptials—this eight and forty hours.' By this hand, I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days, than act Sir Rowland till this time to-morrow.

Re-enter Lady Wiſhfort, *with a letter.*

Lady W. 'Call in the dancers;—Sir Rowland, we'll 'ſit, if you pleaſe, and ſee the entertainment. [*Dance.*' Now, with your permiſſion, Sir Rowland, I will peruſe my letter——I would open it in your preſence, becauſe I would not make you uneaſy. If it ſhould make you uneaſy, I would burn it——ſpeak, if it does——but you may ſee the ſuperſcription is like a woman's hand.

Foib. By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it—my heart akes——Get it from her—— [*To him.*

Wait. A woman's hand! No, Madam, that's no woman's hand, I ſee that already. That's ſome body whoſe throat muſt be cut.

Lady W. Nay, Sir Rowland, ſince you give me a proof of your paſſion, by your jealouſy, I promiſe you I'll make a return, by a frank communication——you ſhall ſee it—we'll open it together——look you here. [*Reads*] "Madam, though unknown to you," Look you there, 'tis from no body that I know.——"I have that honour for your character, that I think myſelf obliged to let you know you are abuſed. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland, is a cheat and a raſcal." Oh heavens! what's this?

Foib. Unfortunate, all's ruin'd.

Wait. How, how, let me ſee, let me ſee—[*Reading,*] "A raſcal, and diſguis'd and ſuborn'd for that impoſture"——O villany! O villany! "by the contrivance of"——

Lady W.

Lady W. I ſhall faint, I ſhall die, oh!

Foib. Say 'tis your nephew's hand—Quickly, his plot, ſwear, ſwear it.——— [*To him.*

Wait. Here's a villain, Madam, don't you perceive it, don't you ſee it?

Lady W. Too well, too well. I have ſeen too much.

Wait. I told you at firſt I knew the hand—A woman's hand! The raſcal writes a ſort of a large hand; your Roman hand——I ſaw there was a throat to be cut preſently. If he were my ſon, as he is my nephew, I'd piſtol him———

Foib. O treachery! But are you ſure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Wait. Sure! Am I here? do I live? Do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the ſame character.

Lady W. How!

Foib. O what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were preſent at this juncture! This was the buſineſs that brought Mr. Mirabell diſguis'd to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought ſomething was contriving, when he ſtole by me, and would have hid his face.

Lady W. How, how——I heard the villain was in the houſe, indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when Sir Wilfull was to have made his addreſſes.

Foib. Then, then Madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber; but I would not tell your ladyſhip to diſcompoſe you when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is ſhort.

Foib. No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Wait. Law! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cauſe——My lady ſhall be ſatisfied of my truth and innocence, though it coſt me my life.

Lady W. No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight; if you ſhould be killed, I muſt never ſhew my face; 'O conſider my reputation, Sir Rowland.—No, you ſhan't 'fight, I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her 'confeſs.'—I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Wait.

Wait. I am charmed, Madam; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you. I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady W. Ay, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort; bring the black box.

Wait. And may I presume to bring a contract, to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

Lady W. Bring what you will; but come alive. Pray, come alive. 'Oh, this is a happy discovery!'

Wait. Dead or alive, I'll come; and married we will be, in spite of treachery; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:

Ere long you shall substantial proof receive
That I'm an arrant knight——

Foib. ——Or arrant knave.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE *continues.*

Enter Lady Wishfort *and* Foible.

Lady Wishfort.

OUT of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered; thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing——Begone, begone, begone, go, go—that I took from washing of old gauze, and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chafing-dish of starv'd embers, and dining behind a traverse rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage. Go, go, starve again; do, do.

Foib. Dear Madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

Lady W. Away, out, out; go, set up for yourself again, do; drive a trade, do, with your three-penny-worth of small ware, flaunting upon a pack-thread, under a brandy-seller's bulk, or against a dead wall, by a ballad-monger. Go, hang out an old frisoneer gorget, with a yard of yellow colberteen again, do; an old

gnawed maſk, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glaſs necklace, with the beads broken, and a quilted night-cap, with one ear; go, go, drive a trade. Theſe were your commodities, you treacherous trull; this was the merchandiſe you dealt in, when I took you into my houſe, placed you next myſelf, and made you governante of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your neſt?

Foib. No, no, dear Madam. Do but hear me; have but a moment's patience; I'll confeſs all. Mr. Mirabell ſeduced me. I am not the firſt that he has wheedled with his diſſembling tongue: your ladyſhip's own wiſdom has been deluded by him; then how ſhould I, a poor ignorant, defend myſelf? Oh, Madam, if you knew but what he promiſed me, and how he aſſured me your ladyſhip ſhould come to no damage! or elſe the wealth of the Indies ſhould not have bribed me to conſpire againſt ſo good, ſo ſweet, ſo kind a lady as you have been to me.

Lady W. No damage! What, to betray me, to marry me to a caſt ſerving-man; to make me a receptacle, an hoſpital for a decayed pimp! No damage! Oh, thou frontleſs impudence, 'more than a big-bellied actreſs!'

Foib. Pray, do but hear me, Madam. He could not marry your ladyſhip, Madam: no, indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was married to me firſt, to ſecure your ladyſhip. He could not have bedded your ladyſhip; for if he had conſummated with your ladyſhip, he muſt have run the riſque of the law, and been put upon his clergy—Yes, indeed, I enquired of the law, in that caſe, before I would meddle or make.

Lady W. What, then, I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it ſeems, while you were catering for Mirabell. I have been broker for you. What, have you made a paſſive bawd of me? This exceeds all precedent. I am brought to fine uſes, to become a botcher of ſecond-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews. I'll couple you; yes, I'll baſte you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's-Place you, as I'm a perſon. Your turtle is in cuſtody already: you ſhall coo in the ſame cage, if there be conſtable or warrant in the pariſh. [*Exit.*

Foib. Oh, that ever I was born! Oh, that ever I was married!—A bride! ay, I ſhall be a Bridewell bride. Oh!

Enter Mrs. Fainall.

Mrs. Fain. Poor Foible! what's the matter?

Foib. Oh, Madam, my Lady's gone for a conſtable! I ſhall be had to a juſtice, and put to Bridewell, to beat hemp. Poor Waitwell's gone to priſon already.

Mrs. Fain. Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell is gone to give ſecurity for him. This is all Marwood's and my huſband's doing.

Foib. Yes, I know it, Madam; ſhe was in my Lady's cloſet, and overheard all that you ſaid to me before dinner. She ſent the letter to my Lady; and that miſſing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arreſt Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the mean time, Mrs. Marwood declared all to my Lady.

Mrs. Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the letter? My mother does not ſuſpect my being in the confederacy: I fancy Marwood has not told her, tho' ſhe has told my huſband.

Foib. Yes, Madam; but my Lady did not ſee that part: we ſtifled the letter before ſhe read ſo far. Has that miſchievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyſhip, then?

Mrs. Fain. Ay, all's out, my affair with Mirabell, every thing diſcovered. This is the laſt day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foib. Indeed, Madam, and ſo it is a comfort, if you knew all. He has been even with your ladyſhip; which I could have told you long enough ſince; but I love to keep peace and quietneſs by my good will. I had rather bring friends together, than ſet them at a diſtance. But Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs. Fain. Sayſt thou ſo, Foible? Canſt thou prove this?

Foib. I can take my oath of it, Madam, ſo can Mrs. Mincing; we have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal ſomething that paſſed in our chamber, one evening, when you were at Hyde Park; and we were thought to have gone a walking; but we went up unawares--Though we were ſworn to ſecrecy too; Madam

Marwood

Marwood took a book, and swore us upon it; but it was but a book of poems: so long as it was not a bible-oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs. Fain. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish. Now, Mincing——

Enter Mincing.

Minc. My Lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, Mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her: he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my Lady's closet, till my old Lady's anger is abated. Oh, my old Lady is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said——He swears, and my old Lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, Mem, how that he'll have my Lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs. Fain. Does your Lady, or Mirabell, know that?

Minc. Yes, Mem; they have sent me to see if Sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My Lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pounds. Oh, come, Mrs. Foible; I hear my old Lady.

Mrs. Fain. Foible, you must tell Mincing, that she must prepare to vouch, when I call her.

Foib. Yes, yes, Madam.

Minc. Oh, yes, Mem, I'll vouch any thing for your ladyship's service, be what it will. [*Ex.* Foib. *and* Minc.

Enter Lady Wishfort *and* Marwood.

Lady W. Oh, my dear friend! how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor, Sir Rowland; and now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to desarts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves, and be shepherdesses.

Mrs. Mar. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, Madam; we shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

Lady W. Oh, daughter, daughter! is it poſſible thou ſhouldſt be my child, bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh, and, as I may ſay, another Me, and yet tranſgreſs the moſt minute particle of ſevere virtue? 'Is it poſſible 'you ſhould lean aſide to iniquity, who have been caſt in 'the direct mould of virtue? I have not only been a 'mould, but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.'

Mrs. Fain. I don't underſtand your ladyſhip.

Lady W. Not underſtand! Why, have you not been naught? Have you not been ſophiſticated? Not underſtand! Here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldums. I muſt pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough ——

Mrs. Fain. I'm wronged and abuſed, and ſo are you. 'Tis a falſe accuſation, as falſe as hell, as falſe as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my falſe huſband.

Mrs. Mar. My friend, Mrs. Fainall! Your huſband my friend! What do you mean?

Mrs. Fain. I know what I mean, Madam, and ſo do you; and ſo ſhall the world, at a time convenient.

Mrs. Mar. I am ſorry to ſee you ſo paſſionate, Madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am ſorry my zeal to ſerve your ladyſhip and family, ſhould admit of miſconſtruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, Madam, if I meddle no more with an affair, in which I am not perſonally concerned.

Lady W. Oh, dear friend! I am ſo aſhamed that you ſhould meet with ſuch returns——You ought to aſk pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature! ſhe deſerves more from you, than all your life can accompliſh. Oh, don't leave me deſtitute in this perplexity. No, ſtick to me, my good genius.

Mrs. Fain. I tell you, Madam, you're abuſed. Stick to you! ay, like a leach, to ſuck your beſt blood—ſhe'll drop off when ſhe's full. Madam, you ſhan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a braſs counter, in compoſition for me. I defy them all. Let them prove their aſperſions. I know my own innocence, and dare ſtand a trial. [*Exit.*

Lady W. Why, if ſhe ſhould be innocent; if ſhe ſhould be

be wronged after all, ha?——I don't know what to think——' And, I promiſe you, her education 'has been very unexceptionable. I may ſay it: for 'I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very 'infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impreſs 'upon her tender years a young odium and averſion to 'the very ſight of men——ay, friend, ſhe would ha' 'ſhriek'd, if ſhe had but ſeen a man, till ſhe was in her 'teens. As I'm a perſon, 'tis true. She was never ſuf-'fered to play with a male child, tho' but in coats; nay, 'her very babies were of the feminine gender. Oh, ſhe 'never looked a man in the face, but her own father, or 'the chaplain, and him we made a ſhift to put upon her 'for a woman, by the help of his long garments, and his 'ſleek face, 'till ſhe was going in her fifteen.

'*Mrs. Mar.* 'Twas much ſhe ſhould be deceived ſo 'long.

'*Lady W.* I warrant you, or ſhe would never have 'borne to have been catechized by him, and have heard 'his long lectures againſt ſinging and dancing, and ſuch 'debaucheries; and going to filthy plays, and profane 'muſic-meetings, where the lewd trebles ſqueak nothing 'but bawdy, and the baſſes roar blaſphemy. Oh, ſhe 'would have ſwooned at the ſight or name of an ob-'ſcene play-book! And can I think, after all this, that 'my daughter can be naught? What, a whore, and 'thought it excommunication to ſet her foot within the 'door of a playhouſe?' Oh, dear friend, I can't believe it! No, no, as ſhe ſays, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mrs. Mar. Prove it, Madam! what, and have your name proſtituted in a public court: yours and your daugh-ter's reputation worried at the bar, by a pack of bawling lawyers? To be uſhered in with an O Yes of ſcandal; 'and 'have your caſe opened by an old fumbling letcher in a 'coif, like a man-midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy 'to light; to be a theme for legal punſters, and quibblers 'by the ſtatute; and become a jeſt, againſt a rule of court, 'where there is no precedent for a jeſt in any record, 'not even in Doomſday-book; to diſcompoſe the gravity 'of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in 'more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tick-'led with the proceeding, ſimpers under a grey beard,

'and fidges off and on his cushion, as if he had swallowed 'cantharides, or sat upon cow-itch.'

Lady W. Oh, 'tis very hard!

'*Mrs. Mar.* And then to have my young revellers of 'the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle, 'and after talk it over again in Commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

'*Lady W.* Worse and worse!'

Mrs. Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must, after this, be consigned by the short-hand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs of hawkers, 'with voices more licentious than the 'loud flounder-man's:' and this you must hear till you are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady W. Oh, 'tis insupportable! No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound; I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all; any thing, every thing for composition.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, Madam, I advise nothing; I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniencies which, perhaps, you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall; if he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

Enter Fainall.

Lady W. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood. No, no, I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, Madam, I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady, your friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life, on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady W. Never to marry!

Fain. No more Sir Rowlands—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

'*Mrs. Mar.* That condition, I dare answer, my Lady 'will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but 'too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Be-'sides, Madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude, 'we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

'*Lady*

'*Lady W.* Ay, that's true; but in case of necessity, 'as of health, or some such emergency———

'*Fain.* Oh, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be 'considered; I will only reserve to myself the power to 'choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it mat-'ters not who is your apothecary.' Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady W. This is most inhumanly savage; 'exceeding 'the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.'

Fain. 'I learned it from his Czarish majesty's retinue, 'in a winter evening's conference, over brandy and pep-'per, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as 'they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. 'But this must be agreed unto, and that positively.' Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds, which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) for her disobedience, in contracting herself without your consent or knowledge; and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady W. My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his addresses.

Fain. I come to make demands——I'll hear no objections.

Lady W. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected; which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the mean while, I will go for the said instrument; and, till my return, you may balance this matter in your own discretion. [*Exit.*

Lady W. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel! Must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis severe indeed, Madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

Lady W. 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian; but she would have him, tho' her year was not

not out——Ah, her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now with a witness——I ——shall be mad; dear friend, is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate? ——Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

Enter Millamant *and Sir* Wilfull.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Lady W. Out, caterpillar, call not me aunt? I know you not.

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say——'Sheart, and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt——and if I did, I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke any thing I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin. So pray let's all be friends, she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady W. How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

Milla. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, Madam, and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you are misinformed, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your Ladyship's presence——He is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady W. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor——I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him, I fear I shall turn to stone, petrify incessantly.

Milla. If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady

Lady W. Are you ſure it will be the laſt time?—If I were ſure of that——ſhall I never ſee him again?

Milla. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman; aunt, let him come in; why we are ſworn brothers and fellow travellers.——We are to be Pylades and Oreſtes, he and I——He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over-ſeas once already; and with proviſo that I marry my couſin, will croſs 'em once again, only to bear me company.——'Sheart, I'll call him in——an I ſet on't once, he ſhall come in; and ſee who'll hinder him. [*Goes to the door and hems.*

Mrs. Mar. This is precious tooling, if it would paſs; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady W. Oh, dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mrs. Mar. Not far, Madam; I'll return immediately. [*Exit Mrs.* Mar.

Sir Wil. Look up, man, I'll ſtand by you; 'ſbud an ſhe do frown, ſhe can't kill you;——beſides——harkee, ſhe dare not frown deſperately, becauſe her face is none of her own? 'Sheart, an ſhe ſhould, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream cheeſe; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

Mira. If a deep ſenſe of the many injuries I have offered to ſo good a lady, with a ſincere remorſe, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the leaſt glance of compaſſion, I am too happy——'Ah, Madam, there was a 'time—but let it be forgotten—I confeſs I have deſer-'vedly forfeited the high place I once held of ſighing at 'your feet; nay, kill me not, by turning from me in 'diſdain—I come not to plead for favour; nay, not for 'pardon; I am ſuppliant only for pity'—I am going where I never ſhall behold you more——

Sir Wil. How, fellow-traveller?——You ſhall go by yourſelf then.

Mira. Let me be pitied firſt, and afterwards forgotten—I aſk no more.

Sir Wil. By'r Lady, a very reaſonable requeſt, and will coſt you nothing, aunt——Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt; why you muſt an you are a Chriſtian.

Mira. At leaſt think it is puniſhment enough, that I have loſt what in my heart I hold moſt dear; that to your

your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir Wil. An he does not move me, would I may never be of the Quorum——An it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again,——I would I might never take ſhipping——Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I ſhall melt, I can tell you that, my contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry:——one doleful ſigh more from my fellow-traveller, and 'tis diſſolved.

Lady. Well, nephew, upon your account——Ah, he has a falſe inſinuating tongue——Well, Sir, I will ſtifle my juſt reſentment at my nephew's requeſt——I will endeavour what I can to forget——but on proviſo that you reſign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mira. It is in writing, and with papers of concern; but I have ſent my ſervant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your tranſcendent goodneſs.

'*L. W.* Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue; 'when I did not ſee him, I could have bribed a villain 'to his aſſaſſination; but his appearance rakes the em- 'bers which have ſo long lain ſmothered in my breaſt.'

[*Aſide.*

Enter Mr. Fainall *and Mrs.* Marwood.

Fain. Your date of deliberation, Madam, is expired. Here is the inſtrument; are you prepared to ſign?

Lady W. If I were prepared, I am not impowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herſelf by my directions to Sir Wilfull.

Fain. That ſham is too groſs to paſs on me——though 'tis impoſed upon you, Madam.

Milla. Sir, I have given my conſent.

Mira. And, Sir, I have reſigned my pretenſions.

Sir Wil. And, Sir, I aſſert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, Sir, and of your inſtrument. 'Sheart an you talk of an inſtrument, Sir, I have an old fox by my thigh ſhall hack your inſtrument of ram vellum to ſhreds, Sir. It ſhall not be ſufficient for a mittimus, or a taylor's meaſure; therefore withdraw your inſtrument, or by'r Lady I ſhall draw mine.

Lady

Lady W. Hold, nephew, hold.

Milla. Good Sir Wilfull, reſpite your valour.

Fain. Indeed! Are you provided of your guard, with your ſingle beaf-eater there. But I'm prepared for you; and inſiſt upon the firſt propoſal. You ſhall ſubmit your own eſtate to my management, and abſolutely make over my wife's to my ſole uſe; as purſuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant—I ſuppoſe, Madam, your conſent is not requiſite in this caſe; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your reſignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right. ——You may draw your fox if you pleaſe, Sir, and make a bear-garden flouriſh ſomewhere elſe: for here it will not avail. This, my lady Wiſhfort, muſt be ſubſcribed, or your darling daughter's turned a-drift, like a leaky hulk, to ſink or ſwim, as ſhe and the current of this lewd town can agree.

Lady W. 'Is there no means, no remedy to ſtop my 'ruin?' Ungrateful wretch! doſt thou not owe thy being, thy ſubſiſtence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll anſwer you when I have the reſt of it in my poſſeſſion.

Mira. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—'I own I have not deſerved you ſhould 'owe any obligation to me;' or elſe perhaps I could adviſe——

Lady W. Oh, what? what? To ſave me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's paſt; nay, I'll conſent to any thing to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

Mira. Ay, Madam: but that's too late, my reward is intercepted. You have diſpoſed of her, who only could have made me a compenſation for all my ſervices:—— But be it as it may, I am reſolved I'll ſerve you; you ſhall not be wronged in this ſavage manner.

Lady W. How! Dear Mr. Mirabell? Can you be ſo generous at laſt! But it is not poſſible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you ſhall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but ſave me from this imminent danger.

Mira. Will you? I take you at your word. I aſk no more. I muſt have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady W. Ay, ay, any body, any body.

Mira.

Mira. Foible is one, and a penitent.

Enter Mrs. Fainall, Foible, *and* Mincing.

Mrs. Mar. Oh, my ſhame! Theſe corrupt things are brought hither to expoſe me. [*To* Fain.

[Mira. *and Lady go to Mrs.* Fain *and* Foib.

Fain. If it muſt all come out, why let them know it; 'tis but the Way of the World. That ſhall not urge me to relinquiſh or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will inſiſt the more.

Foib. Yes indeed, Madam, I'll take my bible oath of it.

Min. And ſo will I, Mem.

Lady W. Oh, Marwood, Marwood, art thou falſe? My friend deceive me! Haſt thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs. Mar. Have you ſo much ingratitude and injuſtice, to give credit againſt your friend to the aſperſions of two ſuch mercenary trulls?

Minc. Mercenary, Mem! I ſcorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the ſame token, you ſwore us to ſecrecy upon Meſſalina's poems. Mercenary! No, if we would have been mercenary, we ſhould have held our tongues; you would have bribed us ſufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an inſignificant thing — Well, what are you the better for this? Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient; I'll be put off no longer——You, thing, that was a wife, ſhall ſmart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy ſhame: your body ſhall be naked as your reputation.

Mrs. Fain. I deſpiſe you, and defy your malice—You have aſperſed me wrongfully—I have proved your falſehood—Go, you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but ſtarve together——Periſh.

Fain. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fool'd no longer.

Lady W. Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is ſmall comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mira. O, in good time——your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, Madam.

Enter Waitwell, *with a box of writings.*

L. W. O, Sir Rowland——Well, raſcal.

Wait. What your ladyſhip pleaſes—I have brought the black box at laſt, Madam.

Mira. Give it me. ‘ Madam, you remember your ‘ promiſe.

‘ *Lady W.* Ay, dear Sir.’

Mira. Where are the gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, Sir, rubbing their eyes—juſt riſen from ſleep.

Fain. ’Sdeath, what’s this to me? I’ll not wait your private concerns.

Enter Petulant *and* Witwoud.

Pet. How now? What’s the matter? Whoſe hand’s out?

Wit. Hey-day! what are you all got together, like players at the end of the laſt act?

Mira. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requeſted your hands as witneſſes to a certain parchment.

Wit. Ay, I do, my hand I remember.—Petulant ſet his mark.

Mira. You wrong him, his name is fairly written, as ſhall appear——you do not remember, gentlemen, any thing of what the parchment contained ——— [*Undoing the box.*

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

Mira. Very well, now you ſhall know—‘ Madam, ‘ your promiſe.

‘ *Lady W.* Ay, ay, Sir, upon my honour.’

Mira. Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you ſhould know, that your lady, while ſhe was at her own diſpoſal, and before you had by your inſinuations wheedled her out of a pretended ſettlement of the greateſt part of her fortune———

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mira. Yes, Sir. I ſay that this lady, while a widow, having, it ſeems, received ſome cautions reſpecting your inconſtancy and tyranny of temper, ‘ which from her ‘ own partial opinion and fondneſs of you, ſhe could ‘ never have ſuſpected,’ ſhe did, I ſay, by the wholſome advice of friends, and of ſages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this ſame, as her act and deed, to me in truſt, and to the uſes within mentioned. You may read, if you

Pleaſe——[*Holding out the parchment*] though perhaps what is written on the back may ſerve your occaſions.

Fain. Very likely, Sir. What's here? Damnation! [*Reads.*] "A deed of conveyance of the whole eſtate real of Arabella Languiſh, widow, in truſt to Edward Mirabell." Confuſion!

Mira. Even, ſo, Sir, 'tis the Way of the World, Sir; of the widows of the world. I ſuppoſe this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

Fain. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be reveng'd——
[*Offers to run at* Mrs. Fain.

Sir Wil. Hold, Sir! now you may make your bear-garden flouriſh ſomewhere elſe, Sir.

Fain. Mirabell, you ſhall hear of this, Sir, be ſure you ſhall——Let me paſs, oaf. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Fain. Madam, you ſeem to ſtifle your reſentment: you had better give it vent.

Mrs. Mar. Yes, it ſhall have vent——and to your confuſion, or I'll periſh in the attempt. [*Exit* Mrs. Mar.

Lady W. O daughter, daughter, 'tis plain thou haſt inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whoſe advice all is owing.

Lady W. Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promiſe,—and I muſt perform mine.——Firſt, I pardon, for your ſake, Sir Rowland there, and Foible——The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that——

Mira. For that, Madam, give yourſelf no trouble,—let me have your conſent—Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compaſſion upon lovers, and generouſly engaged a volunteer in this action, for our ſervice; and now deſigns to proſecute his travels.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My couſin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and ſhe loves him, and they deſerve one another; my reſolution is to ſee foreign parts——I have ſet on't——and when I'm ſet on't, I muſt do't. And if theſe two gentlemen wou'd travel too, I think they may be ſpared.

Pet. For my part, I ſay little—I think things are beſt off or not.

Wit.

Wit. I gad, I underſtand nothing of the matter—I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-ſchool.

Lady W. Well, Sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Milla. Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myſelf to you over again?

Mira. Ay, and over and over again; [*Kiſſes her hand.*] I would have you as often as poſſibly I can. Well heaven grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're marry'd; ' or if you will toy now, let us have a ' dance in the mean time; that we who are not lovers ' may have ſome other employment beſides looking on.

' *Mira.* With all my heart, dear Sir Wilfull. What ' ſhall we do for muſic?

' *Foib.* O, Sir, ſome that were provided for Sir Row-' land's entertainment, are yet within call. [*A dance.*'

Lady W. As I am a perſon I can hold out no longer—I ' have waſted my ſpirits ſo to-day already, that I am ready ' to ſink under the fatigue; and' I cannot but have ſome fear upon me yet, that my ſon Fainall, will purſue ſome deſperate courſe.

Mira. Madam, diſquiet not yourſelf on that account; to my knowledge, his circumſtances are ſuch, he muſt of force comply; ' for my part I will contribute all ' that in me lies, to a re-union.' In the mean time, Madam, [*To* Mrs. Fain.] let me, before theſe witneſſes, reſtore to you this deed of truſt; it may be a means, well managed, to make you live eaſily together.

From hence let thoſe be warn'd, who mean to wed;
Leſt mutual falſhood ſtain the bridal-bed:
For each deceiver to his coſt may find,
That marriage-frauds, too oft are paid in kind.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

AFTER our Epilogue this croud diſmiſſes,
I'm thinking how this play'll be pull'd to pieces.
But pray conſider, e're you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twould be, to pleaſe you all.
There are ſome critics ſo with ſpleen diſeas'd,
They ſcarcely come, inclining to be pleas'd:
And ſure he muſt have more than mortal ſkill,
Who pleaſes any one againſt his will.
Then all bad poets, we are ſure are foes,
And how their number's ſwell'd, the town well knows;
In ſhoals, I've mark'd 'em, judging in the pit;
Tho' they're on no pretence for judgment fit,
But that they have been damn'd for want of wit.
Since when, they, by their own offences taught,
Set up for ſpies on plays, and finding fault.
Others there are, whoſe malice we'd prevent;
Such, who watch plays, with ſcurrilous intent
To mark out who by characters are meant:
And tho' no perfect likeneſs they can trace;
Yet each pretends to know the copy'd face.
Theſe, with falſe gloſſes, feed their own ill-nature,
And turn to libel, what was meant a ſatire.
May ſuch malicious fops this fortune find,
To think themſelves alone the fools deſign'd:
If any are ſo arrogantly vain,
To think they ſingly can ſupport a ſcene,
And furniſh fool enough to entertain.
For well the learn'd and the judicious know,
That ſatire ſcorns to ſtoop ſo meanly low,
As any one abracted fop to ſhew.
For, as when painters form a matchleſs face,
They from each fair one, catch ſome diff'rent grace;
And ſhining features in one portrait blend,
To which no ſingle beauty muſt pretend:
So poets oft, do in one piece expoſe,
Whole belles aſſemblées *of coquets and beaus.*

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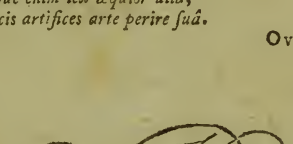
Quàm necis artifices arte perire suâ.

OVID, de Arte Am.



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MDCCLXXVI.

To her Royal Highneſs the

PRINCESS.

MADAM,

THAT high ſtation, which, by your birth, you hold above the people, exacts from every one, as a duty, whatever honours they are capable of paying to your Royal Highneſs: but that more exalted place, to which your virtues have raiſed you, above the reſt of princes, makes the tribute of our admiration and praiſe, rather a choice, more immediately preventing that duty. The public gratitude is ever founded on a public benefit; and what is univerſally bleſſed, is always an univerſal bleſſing. Thus, from yourſelf we derive the offerings which we bring; and that incenſe which ariſes to your name, only returns to its original, and but naturally requires the parent of its being.

From hence it is, that this poem, conſtituted on a moral whoſe end it is to recommend and to encourage virtue, of conſequence, has recourſe to your Royal Highneſs's patronage; aſpiring to caſt itſelf beneath your feet, and declining approbation, 'till you ſhall condeſcend to own it, and vouchſafe to ſhine upon it, as on a creature of your influence.

It is from the example of princes, that virtue becomes a faſhion in the people; for even they who are averſe to inſtruction, will yet be fond of imitation.

But there are multitudes who never can have means nor opportunities of ſo near an acceſs, as to partake of the benefit of ſuch examples. And, to theſe, tragedy, which diſtinguiſhes itſelf from the vulgar poetry by the dignity of its characters, may be of uſe and information. For they who are at that diſtance from original greatneſs, as to be deprived of the happineſs of contemplating the perfections, and real excellencies of your Royal Highneſs's perſon in your court, may yet behold ſome ſmall ſketch-

es and imagings of the virtues of your mind, abſtracted, and repreſented on the theatre.

Thus poets are inſtructed, and inſtruct; not alone by precepts which perſuade, but alſo by examples which illuſtrate. Thus is delight interwoven with inſtruction; when not only virtue is preſcribed, but alſo repreſented.

But if we are delighted with the livelineſs of a feigned repreſentation of great and good perſons and their actions, how muſt we be charmed with beholding the perſons themſelves? If one or two excelling qualities, barely touched in the ſingle action and ſmall compaſs of a play, can warm an audience with a concern and regard even for the ſeeming ſucceſs and proſperity of the actor, with what zeal muſt the hearts of all be filled for the continued and encreaſing happineſs of thoſe who are the true and living inſtances of elevated and perfiſting virtue? Even the vicious themſelves muſt have a ſecret veneration for thoſe peculiar graces and endowments which are daily ſo eminently conſpicuous in your Royal Highneſs; and, though repining, feel a pleaſure, which, in ſpite of envy, they per-force approve.

If, in this piece, humbly offered to your Royal Highneſs, there ſhall appear the reſemblance of any of thoſe many excellencies which you ſo promiſcuouſly poſſeſs, to be drawn ſo as to merit your leaſt approbation, it has the end and accompliſhment of its deſign. And however imperfect it may be in the whole, through the inexperience or incapacity of the author; yet if there is ſo much as to convince your Royal Highneſs, that a play may be, with induſtry, ſo diſpoſed (in ſpite of the licentious practice of the modern theatre) as to become ſometimes an innocent, and not unprofitable entertainment; it will abundantly gratify the ambition, and recompenſe the endeavours of

Your Royal Highneſs's
Moſt obedient, and
Moſt humbly devoted ſervant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

PRO-

PROLOGUE.

THE time has been, when plays were not so plenty,
And a less number, new, would well content ye.
Now plays did then like almanacks appear,
And one was thought sufficient for a year:
Though they are more like almanacks of late;
For in one year, I think, they're out of date.
Nor were they, without reason, join'd together;
For just as one prognosticates the weather,
How plentiful the crop, or scarce the grain,
What peals of thunder, or what showers of rain;
So t'other can foretel, by certain rules,
What crops of coxcombs, or what floods of fools.
In such like prophecies were poets skill'd,
Which now they find in their own tribe fulfill'd.
The dearth of wit they did so long presage,
Is fallen on us, and almost starves the stage.
Were you not griev'd, as often as you saw
Poor actors thresh such empty sheafs of straw?
Toiling and lab'ring at their lungs' expence,
To start a jest, or force a little sense?
Hard fate for us, still harder in th' event;
Our authors sin, but we alone repent.
Still they proceed, and, at our charge, write worse;
'Twere some amends, if they cloud reimburse;
But there's the devil, tho' their cause is lost,
There's no recovering damages or cost.
Good wits, forgive this liberty we take,
Since custom gives the losers leave to speak.
But if, provok'd, your dreadful wrath remains,
Take your revenge upon the coming scenes:
For that damn'd poet's spar'd, who damns a brother,
As one thief 'scapes that executes another.
Thus far alone does to the wits relate;
But from the rest we hope a better fate.
To please, and move, has been our poet's theme,
Art may direct, but nature is his aim;

And nature miſs'd, in vain he boaſts his art,
For only nature can affect the heart.
Then freely judge the ſcenes that ſhall enſue;
But as with freedom, judge with candour too.
He would not loſe, thro' prejudice, his cauſe;
Nor wou'd obtain, precariouſly, applauſe.
Impartial cenſure he requeſts from all,
Prepar'd, by juſt decrees, to ſtand or fall.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Manuel, the king of Granada,	Mr. Aickin.
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WOMEN.

Almeria, the princeſs of Granada,	Mrs. Yates.
Zara, a captive queen,	Miſs Younge.
Leonora, chief attendant on the princeſs,	Mrs. Johnſton.

Women, eunuchs, and mutes attending *Zara*, guards, &c.

SCENE, *GRANADA*.

THE

Mourning Bride.

A TRAGEDY.

Taken from the

MANAGER's BOOK,

AT THE

Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

MEN.

Manuel,	—	—	*Mr. Clarke.*
Gonſalez,	—	—	*Mr. Hull.*
Garcia,	—	—	*Mr. Whitfield.*
Perez,	—	—	*Mr. Thompſon.*
Alonzo,	—	—	*Mr. Fearon.*
Oſmyn,	—	—	*Mr. Lewis.*
Heli,	—	—	*Mr. Davies.*
Selim,	—	—	*Mr. Booth.*

WOMEN.

Almeria,	—	—	*Miſs Brunton.*
Zara,	—	—	*Miſs Younge.*
Leonora,	—	—	*Miſs Platt.*

Women, Eunuchs, and Mutes, attending Zara, *Guards,* &c.

SCENE, *GRANADA.*

THE MOURNING BRIDE.

ACT I.

SCENE, *a room of ſtate.*

The curtain riſing ſlowly to ſoft muſic, diſcovers Almeria *in mourning*, Leonora *waiting in mourning.*

After the muſic, Almeria *riſes from her chair, and comes forward.*

ALMERIA.

MUSIC has charms to ſooth a ſavage breaſt,
To ſoften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read, that things inanimate have mov'd,
And as with living ſouls, have been inform'd,
By magic numbers and perſuaſive ſound.
What then am I? Am I more ſenſeleſs grown
Than trees or flint? Oh, force of conſtant woe!
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.
Anſelmo ſleeps, and is at peace; laſt night
The ſilent tomb receiv'd the good old king;
He and his ſorrows now are ſafely lodg'd
Within its cold, but hoſpitable boſom.
Why am not I at peace?

Leon. Dear Madam, ceaſe,
Or moderate your grief; there is no cauſe——

Alm. No cauſe! Peace, peace; there is eternal cauſe,
And miſery eternal will ſucceed.
Thou canſt not tell—thou haſt indeed no cauſe.

Leon. Believe me, Madam, I lament Anſelmo,
And always did compaſſionate his fortune;
Have often wept, to ſee how cruelly
Your father kept in chains his fellow-king:

And oft, at night, when all have been retir'd,
Have ſtol'n from bed, and to his priſon crept;
Where, while his gaoler ſlept, I thro' the grate
Have ſoftly whiſper'd, and enquir'd his health;
Sent in my ſighs and pray'rs for his deliv'rance;
For ſighs and pray'rs were all that I could offer.

Alm. Indeed thou haſt a ſoft and gentle nature.
That thus could melt to ſee a ſtranger's wrongs.
Oh, Leonora, hadſt thou known Anſelmo,
How wou'd thy heart have bled to ſee his ſufferings!
Thou hadſt no cauſe, but general compaſſion.

Leon. Love of my royal miſtreſs gave me cauſe;
My love of you begot my grief for him;
For I had heard, that when the chance of war
Had bleſs'd Anſelmo's arms with victory,
And the rich ſpoil of all the field, and you,
The glory of the whole, were made the prey
Of his ſucceſs; 'that then, in ſpite of hate,
'Revenge, and that hereditary feud
'Between Valentia's and Granada's kings,'
He did endear himſelf to your affection,
By all the worthy and indulgent ways
His moſt induſtrious goodneſs cou'd invent;
Propoſing, by a match between Alphonſo
His ſon, the brave Valentian prince, and you,
To end the long diſſention, and unite
The jarring crowns.

'*Alm.* Alphonſo! O, Alphonſo!
'Thou too art quiet—long haſt been at peace—
'Both, both——father and ſon are now no more.
'Then why am I? Oh, when ſhall I have reſt?
'Why do I live to ſay you are no more?
'Why are all theſe things thus?—Is it of force?
'Is there neceſſity I muſt be miſerable?
'Is it of moment to the peace of Heav'n
'That I ſhou'd be afflicted thus?——If not,
'Why is it thus contriv'd? Why are things laid
'By ſome unſeen hand, ſo, as of ſure conſequence,
'They muſt to me bring curſes, grief of heart,
'The laſt diſtreſs of life, and ſure deſpair?

'*Leon.* Alas! you ſearch too far, and think too deeply.'

Alm. Why was I carry'd to Anſelmo's court?

Or

Or there, why was I us'd so tenderly?
Why not ill treated, like an enemy?
For so my father wou'd have us'd his child.
Oh, Alphonso, Alphonso!
Devouring seas have wash'd thee from my sight.
No time shall raze thee from my memory;
No, I will live to be thy monument:
The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb:
But in my heart thou art interr'd; there, there,
Thy dear resemblance is for ever fix'd;
My love, my lord, my husband still, tho' lost.

Leon. Husband! Oh, Heav'ns!

Alm. Alas! what have I said?
My grief has hurry'd me beyond all thought.
I wou'd have kept that secret; though I know
Thy love, and faith to me deserve all confidence.
'But 'tis the wretch's comfort still to have
'Some small reserve of near and inward woe,
'Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,
'Which they unseen may wail, and weep, and mourn,
'And, glutton-like, alone devour.

'*Leon.* Indeed,
'I knew not this.

'*Alm.* Oh, no, thou know'st not half,
'Know'st nothing of my sorrows—if thou didst—
'If I shou'd tell thee, would'st thou pity me?
'Tell me; I know thou would'st; thou art compassionate.

Leon. Witness these tears——

'*Alm.* I thank thee, Leonora——
'Indeed I do, for pitying thy sad mistress:
'For 'tis, alas! the poor prerogative
'Of greatness to be wretched, and unpitied——
'But I did promise I wou'd tell thee—What?
'My miseries? Thou dost already know 'em.
'And when I told thee thou didst nothing know,
'It was because thou didst not know Alphonso:
'For to have known my loss, thou must have known
'His worth, his truth, and tenderness of love.'

Leon. The memory of that brave prince stands fair
In all report—
And I have heard imperfectly his loss;

But

But fearful to renew your troubles paſt,
I never did preſume to aſk the ſtory.

Alm. If for my ſwelling heart I can, I'll tell thee.
I was a welcome captive in Valentia,
E'en on the day when Manuel, my father,
Led on his conqu'ring troops high as the gates
Of king Anſelmo's palace; which in rage,
And heat of war, and dire revenge, he fir'd.
The good king flying to avoid the flames,
Started amidſt his foes, and made captivity
His fatal refuge—Wou'd that I had fall'n
Amidſt thoſe flames—but 'twas not ſo decreed.
Alphonſo, who foreſaw my father's cruelty,
Had borne the queen and me on board a ſhip
Ready to ſail; and when this news was brought
We put to ſea; but being betray'd by ſome
Who knew our flight, we cloſely were purſu'd,
And almoſt taken; when a ſudden ſtorm
Drove us, and thoſe that follow'd, on the coaſt
Of Afric: There our veſſel ſtruck the ſhore
And bulging 'gainſt a rock, was daſh'd in pieces;
But Heav'n ſpar'd me for yet much more affliction!
Conducting them who follow'd us, to ſhun
The ſhore, and ſave me floating on the waves,
While the good queen and my Alphonſo periſh'd.

Leon. Alas! were you then wedded to Alphonſo?

Alm. That day, that fatal day, our hands were join'd.
For when my lord beheld the ſhip purſuing,
And ſaw her rate ſo far exceeding ours,
He came to me, and begg'd me by my love,
I wou'd conſent the prieſt ſhou'd make us one;
That whether death or victory enſu'd
I might be his, beyond the power of fate:
The queen too did aſſiſt his ſuit—I granted;
And in one day was wedded and a widow.

Leon. Indeed 'twas mournful——

Alm. 'Twas—as I have told thee——
For which I mourn, and will for ever mourn;
Nor will I change theſe black and diſmal robes,
Or ever dry theſe ſwoln and watery eyes;

Or

Or ever taſte content, or peace of heart,
While I have life, and thought of my Alphonſo.
' *Leon.* Look down, good Heav'n, with pity on her
forrows,
' And grant that time may bring her ſome relief.
' *Alm.* Oh, no! time gives increaſe to my afflictions.
' The circling hours, that gather all the woes
' Which are diffus'd thro' the revolving year,
' Come heavy laden with th' oppreſſing weight
' To me; with me, ſucceſſively, they leave
' The ſighs, the tears, the groans, the reſtleſs cares,
' And all the damps of grief, that did retard their flight:
' They ſhake their downy wings, and ſcatter all
' The dire collected dews on my poor head:
' Then fly with joy and ſwiftneſs from me.'
[*Shouts at a diſtance.*
Leon. Hark!
The diſtant ſhouts proclaim your father's triumph.
O ceaſe, for Heav'n's ſake, aſſuage a little
This torrent of your grief, for, much I fear,
'Twill urge his wrath, to ſee you drown'd in tears,
When joy appears in ev'ry other face.
Alm. And joy he brings to ev'ry other heart,
But double, double weight of woe to mine:
For with him Garcia comes—Garcia, to whom
I muſt be ſacrific'd, and all the vows
I gave my dear Alphonſo baſely broken.
No, it ſhall never be; for I will die
Firſt, die ten thouſand deaths—Look down, look down,
Alphonſo, hear the ſacred vow I make; [*Kneels.*
' One moment, ceaſe to gaze on perfect bliſs,
' And bend thy glorious eyes to earth and me;'
And thou, Anſelmo, if yet thou art arriv'd
Thro' all impediments of purging fire,
To that bright Heav'n, where my Alphonſo reigns,
Behold thou alſo, and attend my vow.
If ever I do yield, or give conſent,
By any action, word, or thought, to wed
Another lord; may then juſt Heav'n ſhow'r down
Unheard of curſes on me, greater far
(If ſuch there be in angry Heaven's vengeance)

Than

Than any I have yet endur'd—And now [*Rising.*
My heart has some relief; having so well
Discharg'd this debt, incumbent on my love.
Yet, one thing more I wou'd engage from thee.

Leon. My heart, my life, and will, are only yours.

Alm. I thank thee. 'Tis but this: anon, when all
Are wrapp'd and busied in the general joy,
Thou wilt withdraw, and privately with me
Steal forth, to visit good Anselmo's tomb.

Leon. Alas! I fear some fatal resolution.

Alm. No, on my life, my faith, I mean no ill,
Nor violence—I feel myself more light,
And more at large, since I have made this vow.
Perhaps I would repeat it there more solemnly.
'Tis that, or some such melancholy thought,
Upon my word, no more.

Leon. I will attend you.

Enter Alonzo.

Alon. The lord Gonsalez comes to tell your highness
The king is just arriv'd.

Alm. Conduct him in. [*Exit* Alon.
That's his pretence; his errand is, I know,
To fill my ears with Garcia's valiant deeds;
And gild and magnify his son's exploits.
But I am arm'd with ice around my heart,
Not to be warm'd with words, or idle eloquence.

Enter Gonsalez.

Gon. Be ev'ry day of your long life like this.
The sun, bright conqueſt, and your brighter eyes,
Have all conspir'd to blaze promiscuous light,
And bless this day with most unequal lustre.
Your royal father, my victorious lord,
Loaden with spoils, and ever-living laurel,
Is ent'ring now, in martial pomp, the palace.
Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,
Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth.
Chariots of war, adorn'd with glitt'ring gems,
Succeed; and next, a hundred neighing steeds,
White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills,
That bound and foam, and champ the golden bit,
As they disdain'd the victory they grace.
Prisoners of war in shining fetters follow:

And captains of the nobleſt blood of Afric
Sweat by his chariot wheels, ‘ and lick and grind,
‘ With gnaſhing teeth, the duſt his triumphs raiſe.’
The ſwarming populace ſpread every wall,
‘ And cling, as if with claws they did enforce
‘ Their hold; thro' clifted ſtones ſtretching and ſtaring,
‘ As if they were all eyes, and every limb
‘ Would feed its faculty of admiration:’
While you alone retire, and ſhun this ſight;
This ſight, which is indeed not ſeen (tho' twice
The multitude ſhould gaze) in abſence of your eyes.
Alm. My lord, mine eyes ungratefully behold
The gilded trophies of exterior honours.
Nor will my ears be charm'd with ſounding words,
Or pompous phraſe, the pageantry of ſouls.
But that my father is return'd in ſafety,
I bend to Heav'n with thanks.
Gon. Excellent princeſs!
But 'tis a taſk unfit for my weak age
With dying words to offer at your praiſe.
Garcia, my ſon, your beauty's loweſt ſlave,
Has better done; in proving with his ſword
The force and influence of your matchleſs charms.
Alm. I doubt not of the worth of Garcia's deeds,
Which had been brave, though I had ne'er been born.
Leon. Madam, the king. [*Flouriſh.*
‘ *Alm.* My women. I wou'd meet him.’
[*Attendants to* Almeria *enter in mourning. Symphony of warlike muſic. Enter the* King, *attended by* Garcia *and ſeveral officers. Files of priſoners in chains, and guards, who are ranged in order round the ſtage.* Almeria *meets the* King, *and kneels: afterwards* Gonſalez *kneels and kiſſes the* King's *hand, while* Garcia *does the ſame to the princeſs.*
King. Almeria, riſe—My beſt Gonſalez, riſe.
What, tears! my good old friend—
Gon. But tears of joy.
Believe me, Sir, to ſee you thus, has fill'd
Mine eyes with more delight than they can hold.
King. By Heav'n, thou lov'ſt me, and I'm pleas'd thou doſt;
Take it for thanks, old man, that I rejoice

To see thee weep on this occasion—Some
Here are, who seem to mourn at our success!
Why is't, Almeria, that you meet our eyes,
Upon this solemn day, in these sad weeds?
In opposition to my brightness, you
And yours are all like daughters of affliction.

Alm. Forgive me, Sir, if I in this offend.
The year, which I have vow'd to pay to Heav'n,
In mourning and strict life, for my deliv'rance
From wreck and death, wants yet to be expir'd.

King. Your zeal to Heav'n is great, so is your debt:
Yet something too is due to me, who gave
That life, which Heav'n preserv'd. A day bestow'd
In filial duty, had atton'd and given
A dispensation to your vow—No more.
'Twas weak and wilful—and a woman's error.
Yet, upon thought, it doubly wounds my sight,
To see that sable worn upon the day,
Succeeding that, in which our deadliest foe,
Hated Anselmo, was interr'd—By Heav'n,
It looks as thou didst mourn for him: just so
Thy senseless vow appear'd to bear its date,
Not from that hour wherein thou wert preserv'd,
But that wherein the curs'd Alphonso perish'd.
Ha! What? thou dost not weep to think of that!

Gon. Have patience, royal Sir; the princess weeps
To have offended you. If fate decreed,
One pointed hour should be Alphonso's loss,
And her deliverance, is she to blame?

King. I tell thee she's to blame, not to have feasted
When my first foe was laid in earth, such enmity,
Such detestation bears my blood to his;
My daughter should have revell'd at his death,
She should have made these palace walls to shake,
And all this high and ample roof to ring
With her rejoicings. What, to mourn and weep!
Then, then to weep, and pray, and grieve! by Heav'n,
There's not a slave, a shackled slave of mine,
But should have smil'd that hour, through all his care,
And shook his chains in transport and rude harmony.

Gon. What she has done, was in excess of goodness;

Betray'd by too much piety, to ſeem
As if ſhe had offended.—— Sure, no more.
King. To ſeem is to commit, at this conjuncture.
I wo'not have a ſeeming ſorrow ſeen
To-day.—Retire; diveſt yourſelf with ſpeed
Of that offenſive black; on me be all
The violation of your vow; for you
It ſhall be your excuſe, that I command it.
Gar. [*Kneeling.*] Your pardon, Sir, if I preſume ſo far,
As to remind you of your gracious promiſe.
King. Riſe, Garcia—I forgot. Yet ſtay, Almeria.
Alm. My boding heart!—What is your pleaſure, Sir?
King. Draw near, and give your hand, and, Garcia, yours:
Receive this lord, as one whom I have found
Worthy to be your huſband, and my ſon.
Gar. Thus let me kneel to take—O not to take---
But to devote, and yield myſelf for ever
The ſlave and creature of my royal miſtreſs.
Gon. O let me proſtrate pay my worthleſs thanks---
King. No more; my promiſe long ſince paſs'd, thy ſervices
And Garcia's well-try'd valour, all oblige me.
This day we triumph; but to-morrow's ſun,
Garcia, ſhall ſhine to grace thy nuptials———.
Alm. Oh! [*Faints.*
Gar. She faints! help to ſupport her.
' *Gonſ.* She recovers.
King. ' A fit of bridal fear.' How is't, Almeria?
Alm. A ſudden chilneſs ſeizes on my ſpirits.
Your leave, Sir, to retire.
King. Garcia, conduct her.
[Garcia *leads* Almeria *to the door, and returns.*
This idle vow hangs on her woman's fears,
' I'll have a prieſt ſhall preach her from her faith,
' And make it ſin, not to renounce that vow
' Which I'd have broken.' Now, what would Alonzo?
Enter Alonzo.
Alon. Your beauteous captive, Zara, is arriv'd,
And with a train as if ſhe ſtill were wife
To Albucacim, and the Moor had conquer'd.
King. It is our will ſhe ſhould be ſo attended.

'Bear hence these prisoners.' Garcia, which is he,
Of whose mute valour you relate such wonders?
[*Prisoners led off.*
Gar. Osmyn, who led the Moorish horse; but he,
Great Sir, at her request, attends on Zara.
King. He is your prisoner; as you please dispose him.
Gar. I would oblige him, but he shuns my kindness;
And with a haughty mien, and stern civility,
Dumbly declines all offers. If he speak,
'Tis scarce above a word; as he were born
Alone to do, and did disdain to talk;
At least to talk where he must not command.
King. Such sullenness, and in a man so brave,
Must have some other cause than his captivity.
Did Zara, then, request he might attend her?
Gar. My lord, she did.
King. That, join'd with his behaviour,
Begets a doubt. I'd have 'em watch'd; perhaps
Her chains hang heavier on him than his own.
Enter Alonzo, Zara *and* Osmyn *bound, conducted by* Perez *and a guard, and attended by* Selim *and several mutes and eunuchs in a train.*
King. What welcome, and what honours, beauteous Zara,
A king and conqueror can give, are yours.
A conqueror indeed, where you are won;
Who with such lustre strike admiring eyes,
That had our pomp been with your presence grac'd,
Th' expecting crowd had been deceiv'd; and seen
The monarch enter not triumphant, but
In pleasing triumph led; your beauty's slave.
Zar. If I on any terms could condescend
To like captivity, or think those honours,
Which conquerors in courtesy bestow,
Of equal value with unborrow'd rule
And native right to arbitrary sway,
I might be pleas'd, when I behold this train
With usual homage wait: but when I feel
These bonds, I look with loathing on myself,
And scorn vile slavery, though doubly hid
Beneath mock-praises, and dissembled state.
King. Those bonds! 'Twas my command you should [be free.
How durst you, Perez, disobey?
Perez.

Perez. Great Sir,
Your order was she should not wait your triumph;
But at some distance follow, thus attended.
King. 'Tis false; 'twas more; I bid she should be free;
If not in words, I bid it by my eyes.
Her eyes did more than bid——Free her and hers
With speed—yet stay—my hands alone can make
Fit restitution here——Thus I release you,
And by releasing you, enslave myself.
Zar. Such favours, so conferr'd, tho' when unsought;
Deserve acknowledgment from noble minds.
Such thanks, as one hating to be oblig'd——
Yet hating more ingratitude, can pay,
I offer.
King. Born to excel, and to command!
As by transcendent beauty to attract
All eyes, so by preheminence of soul
To rule all hearts.
Garcia, what's he, who with contracted brow,
[*Beholding* Osmyn *as they unbind him.*
And sullen port, glooms downwards with his eyes;
At once regardless of his chains, or liberty?
Gar. That, Sir, is he of whom I spoke; that's Osmyn.
King. He answers well the character you gave him.
Whence comes it, valiant Osmyn, that a man
So great in arms, as thou art said to be,
So hardly can endure captivity,
The common chance of war?
Osm. Because captivity
Has robb'd me of a dear and just revenge.
King. I understand not that.
Osm. I would not have you.
Zar. That gallant Moor in battle lost a friend,
Whom more than life he lov'd; and the regret,
Of not revenging on his foes that loss,
Has caus'd this melancholy and despair.
King. She does excuse him; 'tis as I suspected.
[*To* Gonf.
Gon. That friend may be herself; seem not to heed
His arrogant reply: she looks concern'd.
King. I'll have enquiry made; perhaps his friend
Yet lives, and is a prisoner. His name?
Zar. Heli.

King. Garcia, that ſearch ſhall be your care:
It ſhall be mine to pay devotion here;
At this fair ſhrine to lay my laurels down,
And raiſe love's altar on the ſpoils of war.
Conqueſt and triumph, now, are mine no more;
Nor will I victory in camps adore:
' For, ling'ring there, in long ſuſpence ſhe ſtands,
' Shifting the prize in unreſolving hands;
' Unus'd to wait, I broke through her delay,
' Fix'd her by force, and ſnatch'd the doubtful day.
' Now late I find that war is but her ſport;
' In love the goddeſs keeps her awful court;'
Fickle in fields, unſteadily ſhe flies,
But rules with ſettled ſway in Zara's eyes. [*Exit.*

The END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE, *repreſenting the iſle of a temple.*

' Garcia, Heli, Perez.

' GARCIA.

' THIS way, we're told, Oſmyn was ſeen to walk;
' Chooſing this lonely manſion of the dead,
' To mourn, brave Heli, thy miſtaken fate.
' *Heli.* Let heav'n with thunder to the centre ſtrike me,
' If to ariſe in very deed from death,
' And to reviſit with my long-clos'd eyes
' This living light, cou'd to my ſoul or ſenſe
' Afford a thought, or ſhew a glimpſe of joy,
' In leaſt proportion to the vaſt delight
' I feel, to hear of Oſmyn's name; to hear
' That Oſmyn lives, and I again ſhall ſee him.
' *Gar.* I've heard, with admiration, of your friendſhip.
' *Per.* Yonder, my lord, behold the noble Moor.
' *Hel.* Where? Where?
' *Gar.* I ſaw him not, nor any like him——
' *Per.* I ſaw him when I ſpoke, thwarting my view,
' And ſtriding with diſtemper'd haſte; his eyes
' Seem'd flame, and flaſh'd upon me with a glance;

' Then

'Then forward ſhot their fires which he purſu'd,
'As to ſome object frightful, yet not fear'd.
'*Gar.* Let's haſte to follow him, and know the cauſe.
'*Hel.* My lord, let me intreat you to forbear:
'Leave me alone, to find and cure the cauſe.
'I know his melancholy, and ſuch ſtarts
'Are uſual to his temper. It might raiſe him
'To act ſome violence upon himſelf,
'So to be caught in an unguarded hour,
'And when his ſoul gives all her paſſions way,
'Secure and looſe in friendly ſolitude.
'I know his noble heart would burſt with ſhame,
'To be ſurpriz'd by ſtrangers in its frailty.
'*Gar.* Go, generous Heli, and relieve your friend.
'Far be it from me, officiouſly to pry
'Or preſs upon the privacies of others.

[*Exit* Heli.

'Perez, the king expects from our return
'To have his jealouſy confirm'd, or clear'd,
'Of that appearing love which Zara bears
'To Oſmyn; but ſome other opportunity
'Muſt make that plain.
'*Per.* To me 'twas long ſince plain,
'And ev'ry look from him and her confirms it.
'*Gar.* If ſo, unhappineſs attends their love,
'And I could pity 'em. I hear ſome coming.
'The friends, perhaps, are met; let us avoid 'em.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Almeria *and* Leonora.

Alm. It was a fancy'd noiſe, for all is huſh'd.
Leon. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Alm. It was thy fear, or elſe ſome tranſient wind
Whiſtling through hollows of this vaulted iſle.
We'll liſten——
Leon. Hark!
Alm. No, all is huſh'd, and ſtill as death—'tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whoſe antient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made ſtedfaſt and immoveable,
Looking tranquility. It ſtrikes an awe
And terror on my aking ſight; the tombs

And

And monumental caves of death look cold,
And ſhoot a chilneſs to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly ſpeak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

Leon. Let us return; the horror of this place
And ſilence will increaſe your melancholy.

Alm. It may my fears, but cannot add to that.
No, I will on; ſhew me Anſelmo's tomb,
Lead me o'er bones and ſculls, and mould'ring earth
Of human bodies; for I'll mix with them,
Or wind me in the ſhroud of ſome pale corſe
Yet green in earth, rather than be the bride
Of Garcia's more deteſted bed: that thought
Exerts my ſpirit; and my preſent fears
Are loſt in dread of greater ill. Then ſhew me,
Lead me, for I am bolder grown: lead on
Where I may kneel, and pay my vows again
To him, to Heav'n, and my Alphonſo's ſoul.

'*Leon.* I go; but Heav'n can tell with what regret.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Heli.

I wander through this maze of monuments,
Yet cannot find him—Hark! ſure 'tis the voice
Of one complaining—There it ſounds—I'll follow it.

[*Exit.*

The SCENE *opening diſcovers a place of tombs: one monument fronting the view greater than the reſt.*

Enter Almeria *and* Leonora.

Leon. Behold the ſacred vault, within whoſe womb
The poor remains of good Anſelmo reſt,
Yet freſh and unconſum'd by time or worms.
What do I ſee? Oh, heav'n! either my eyes
Are falſe, or ſtill the marble door remains
Unclos'd; the iron grates, that lead to death
Beneath, are ſtill wide ſtretch'd upon their hinge,
And ſtaring on us with unfolded leaves.

Alm. Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of death for me;
And that dumb mouth, ſignificant in ſhow,
Invites me to the bed, where I alone
Shall reſt; ſhews me the grave, where nature, weary

And

And long oppreſs'd with woes and bending cares,
May lay the burden down, and ſink in ſlumbers
Of peace eternal. 'Death, grim death, will fold
'Me in his leaden arms, and preſs me cloſe
'To his cold clayie breaſt:' my father then
Will ceaſe his tyranny; and Garcia too
Will fly my pale deformity with loathing.
My ſoul, enlarg'd from its vile bonds, will mount,
And range the ſtarry orbs, and milky ways,
'Of that refulgent world, where I ſhall ſwim
'In liquid light, and float on ſeas of bliſs
To my Alphonſo's ſoul. Oh, joy too great!
Oh, extaſy of thought! Help me, Anſelmo;
Help me, Alphonſo; take me, reach thy hand;
To thee, to thee I call, to thee, Alphonſo:
Oh, Alphonſo!

Oſmyn *aſcending from the tomb.*

Oſm. Who calls that wretched thing that was Alphonſo?

Alm. Angels, and all the hoſt of Heav'n, ſupport me!

Oſm. Whence is that voice, whoſe ſhrillneſs, from the grave,
And growing to his father's ſhroud, roots up
Alphonſo?

Alm. Mercy! Providence! Oh, ſpeak,
Speak to it quickly, quickly; ſpeak to me,
Comfort me, help me, hold me, hide me, hide me,
Leonora, in thy boſom, from the light,
And from my eyes.

Oſm. Amazement and illuſion!
Rivet and nail me where I ſtand, ye pow'rs,
[*Coming forward.*
That motionleſs I may be ſtill deceiv'd.
Let me not ſtir, nor breathe, leſt I diſſolve
That tender, lovely form of painted air,
So like Almeria. Ha! it ſinks, it falls;
I'll catch it ere it goes, and graſp her ſhade.
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis ſhe, 'tis ſhe herſelf!
Nor dead, nor ſhade, but breathing and alive!
It is Almeria, 'tis, it is my wife!

Enter Heli.

Leon. Alas! ſhe ſtirs not yet, nor lifts her eyes;

He

He too is fainting——Help me, help me, ſtranger,
Whoe'er thou art, and lend thy hand to raiſe
Theſe bodies.
Hel. Ha! 'tis he! and with——Almeria!
Oh, miracle of happineſs! Oh, joy
Unhop'd for! does Almeria live!
Oſm. Where is ſhe?
Let me behold and touch her, and be ſure
'Tis ſhe; 'ſhew me her face, and let me feel
'Her lips with mine——'Tis ſhe, I'm not deceiv'd;
'I taſte her breath, I warm'd her and am warm'd.'
Look up, Almeria, bleſs me with thy eyes;
Look on thy love, thy lover, and thy huſband.
Alm. I've ſworn I'll not wed Garcia: why d'ye force me.
Is this a father?
Oſm. Look on thy Alphonſo.
Thy father is not here, my love, nor Garcia:
Nor am I what I ſeem, but thy Alphonſo.
'Wilt thou not know me?' Haſt thou then forgot me?
'Haſt thou thy eyes, yet canſt not ſee Alphonſo?'
Am I ſo alter'd, or art thou ſo chang'd,
That ſeeing my diſguiſe, thou ſeeſt not me?
Alm. It is, it is Alphonſo; 'tis his face,
His voice, I know him now, I know him all.
'Oh, take me to thy arms, and bear me hence,
'Back to the bottom of the boundleſs deep,
'To ſeas beneath, where thou ſo long haſt dwelt.
Oh! how haſt thou returned? How haſt thou charm'd
The wildneſs of the waves and rocks to this?
That thus relenting they have giv'n thee back
To earth, to light and life, to love and me.
Oſm. Oh, I'll not aſk, nor anſwer how, or why
We both have backward trod the paths of fate,
To meet again in life; to know I have thee,
Is knowing more than any circumſtance,
Or means, by which I have thee——
To fold thee thus, to preſs thy balmy lips,
And gaze upon thy eyes, is ſo much joy,
I have not leiſure to reflect, or know,
Or trifle time in thinking.
Alm. Stay a while——
Let me look on thee yet a little more.

'*Oſm.*

'*Osm.* What wouldst thou? thou dost put me from thee.
'*Alm.* Yes.
'*Osm.* And why? What dost thou mean? Why dost thou gaze so?
'*Alm.* I know not; 'tis to see thy face, I think—'
It is too much! too much to bear and live!
To see thee thus again is such profusion
Of joy, of bliss——I cannot bear——I must
Be mad——I cannot be transported thus.
Osm. Thou excellence, thou joy, thou heav'n of love!
Alm. Where hast thou been? and how art thou alive?
'How is all this? All-pow'rful Heav'n, what are we?
'Oh, my strain'd heart—— let me again behold thee,
'For I weep to see thee——Art thou not paler?
'Much, much; how thou art chang'd!
'*Osm.* Not in my love.
'*Alm.* No, no, thy griefs, I know, have done this to thee.
'Thou hast wept much, Alphonso; and, I fear,
'Too much, too tenderly, lamented me.
'*Osm.* Wrong not my love, to say too tenderly.
'No more, my life; talk not of tears or grief;
'Affliction is no more, now thou art found.
'Why dost thou weep, and hold thee from my arms,
'My arms which ake to fold thee fast, and grow
'To thee with twining? Come, come to my heart.
'*Alm.* I will, for I should never look enough.
'They would have marry'd me; but I had sworn
'To Heav'n and thee, and sooner would have dy'd—
'*Osm.* Perfection of all faithfulness and love!
'*Alm.* Indeed I wou'd—Nay, I wou'd tell thee all,
'If I could speak; how I have mourn'd and pray'd:
'For I have pray'd to thee, as to a saint;
'And thou hast heard my pray'r; for thou art come
'To my distress, to my despair, which Heav'n
'Could only, by restoring thee, have cur'd.
'*Osm.* Grant me but life, good Heav'n, but length of days,
'To pay some part, some little of this debt,
'This countless sum of tenderness and love,
'For which I stand engag'd to this all excellence:

'Then

'Then bear me in a whirlwind to my fate,
'Snatch me from life, and cut me short unwarn'd:
'Then, then 'twill be enough—I shall be old,
'I shall have liv'd beyond all æras then
'Of yet unmeasur'd time; when I have made
'This exquisite, this most amazing goodness,
'Some recompence of love and matchless truth.
'*Alm.* 'Tis more than recompence to see thy face:
'If Heav'n is greater joy it is no happiness,
'For 'tis not to be borne—What shall I say?
'I have a thousand things to know and ask,
'And speak—That thou art here beyond all hope,
'All thought; that all at once thou art before me,
'And with such suddenness hast hit my sight,
'Is such surprise, such mystery, such extasy,
'It hurries all my soul, and stuns my sense.'
Sure from thy father's tomb thou didst arise?

Osm. I did; and thou, my love, didst call me; thou.

Alm. True; but how cam'st thou there? Wert thou alone?

Osm. I was, and lying on my father's lead,
When broken echoes of a distant voice
Disturb'd the sacred silence of the vault,
In murmurs round my head. I rose and listen'd,
And thought I heard thy spirit call Alphonso;
I thought I saw thee too; but, Oh, I thought not
That I indeed should be so blest to see thee———

Alm. But still, how cam'st thou thither? How thus?
———Ha!
What's he, who, like thyself, is started here
Ere seen?

Osm. Where? Ha! what do I see, Antonio!
I'm fortunate indeed——my friend too, safe!

Heli. Most happily, in finding you thus bless'd.

Alm. More miracles! Antonio too, escap'd!

Osm. And twice escap'd; both from the rage of seas
And war: for in the fight I saw him fall.

Heli. But fell unhurt, a pris'ner as yourself,
And as yourself made free; hither I came,
Impatiently to seek you, where I knew
Your grief would lead you to lament Anselmo.

'*Osm.*

' *Omf.* There are no wonders, or elſe all is wonder.
' *Heli.* I ſaw you on the ground, and rais'd you up,
' When with aſtoniſhment I ſaw Almeria.
' *Oſm.* I ſaw her too, and therefore ſaw not thee.
' *Alm.* Nor I; nor could I, for my eyes were yours.
Oſm. What means the bounty of all-gracious Heav'n,
That perſevering ſtill, with open hand,
It ſcatters good, as in a waſte of mercy!
Where will this end? But Heav'n is infinite
In all, and can continue to beſtow,
When ſcanty number ſhall be ſpent in telling.
Leon. Or I'm deceiv'd, or I beheld the glimpſe
Of two in ſhining habits croſs the iſle;
Who by their pointing, ſeem to mark this place.
Alm. Sure I have dreamt, if we muſt part ſo ſoon.
Oſm. I wiſh at leaſt our parting were a dream,
Or we could ſleep 'till we again were met.
Heli. Zara with Selim, Sir, I ſaw and know 'em:
You muſt be quick, for love will lend her wings.
Alm. What love? Who is ſhe? Why are you alarm'd?
Oſm. She's the reverſe of thee; ſhe's my unhappineſs.
Harbour no thought that may diſturb thy peace;
' But gently take thyſelf away, leſt ſhe
' Should come, and ſee the ſtraining of my eyes
' To follow thee.'
Retire, my love, I'll think how we may meet
To part no more; my friend will tell thee all;
How I eſcap'd, how I am here, and thus;
How I'm not call'd Alphonſo now, but Oſmyn;
And he Heli. All, all he will unfold,
Ere next we meet——
Alm. Sure we ſhall meet again——
Oſm. We ſhall; we part not but to meet again.
Gladneſs and warmth of ever-kindling love
Dwell with thee, and revive thy heart in abſence.
[*Exeunt* Alm. Leon. *and* Heli.
Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.
Turn your lights inward, eyes, and view my thoughts,
So ſhall you ſtill behold her—'twill not be.
' Oh, impotence of ſight! Mechanic ſenſe!
' Which to exterior objects ow'ſt thy faculty,
' Not ſeeing of election, but neceſſity.

'Thus do our eyes, as do all common mirrors,
'Succeſſively reflect ſucceeding images:
'Not what they would, but muſt; a ſtar, or toad;
'Juſt as the hand of chance adminiſters.
'Not ſo the mind, whoſe undetermin'd view
'Revolves, and to the preſent adds the paſt:
'Eſſaying farther to futurity;
'But that in vain. I have Almeria here
'At once, as I before have ſeen her often—

Enter Zara *and* Selim.

Zar. See where he ſtands, folded and fix'd to earth,
Stiff'ning in thought, a ſtatue among ſtatues.
Why, cruel Oſmyn, doſt thou fly me thus?
'Is it well done? Is this then the return
'For fame, for honour, and for empire loſt?
'But what is loſs of honour, fame, and empire?
'Is this the recompence reſerv'd for love?
'Why, doſt thou leave my eyes, and fly my arms,
'To find this place of horror and obſcurity?'
Am I more loathſome to thee than the grave,
That thou doſt ſeek to ſhield thee there, and ſhun
My love? But to the grave I'll follow thee—
He looks not, minds not, hears not; barb'rous man!
Am I neglected thus? Am I deſpis'd?
Not hear'd! Ungrateful Oſmyn!

Oſm. Ha, 'tis Zara!

Zar. Yes, traitor; Zara, loſt, abandon'd Zara,
Is a regardleſs ſuppliant, now, to Oſmyn.
The ſlave, the wretch that ſhe redeem'd from death,
Diſdains to liſten now, or look on Zara.

Oſm. Far be the guilt of ſuch reproaches from me;
Loſt in myſelf, and blinded by my thoughts,
I ſaw you not till now.

Zar. Now then you ſee me—
But with ſuch dumb and thankleſs eyes you look,
Better I was unſeen, than ſeen thus coldly.

Oſm. What would you from a wretch who came to mourn,
And only for his ſorrows choſe this ſolitude?
Look round; joy is not here, nor chearfulneſs.
You have purſu'd misfortue to its dwelling,
Yet look for gaiety and gladneſs there.

Zar.

Zar. Inhuman! Why, why doſt thou rack me thus?
And, with perverſeneſs, from the purpoſe, anſwer?
What is't to me, this houſe of miſery?
What joy do I require? If thou doſt mourn,
I come to mourn with thee, to ſhare thy griefs,
And give thee, for 'em, in exchange, my love.

Oſm. Oh, that's the greateſt grief—I am ſo poor,
I have not wherewithal to give again.

Zar. Thou haſt a heart, tho' 'tis a ſavage one;
Give it me as it is; I aſk no more
For all I've done, and all I have endur'd:
For ſaving thee, when I beheld thee firſt,
Driv'n by the tempeſt upon my country's coaſt,
Pale and expiring, drench'd in briny waves,
Thou and thy friend, till my compaſſion found thee;
Compaſſion! ſcarce will't own that name, ſo ſoon,
So quickly, was it love; for thou wert godlike
E'en then. Kneeling on earth, I loos'd my hair,
And with it dry'd thy wat'ry cheeks, then chaf'd
Thy temples, till reviving blood aroſe,
And, like the morn, vermilion'd o'er thy face.
Oh, Heav'n! how did my heart rejoice and ake,
When I beheld the day-break of thy eyes,
And felt the balm of thy reſpiring lips!

'*Oſm.* Oh, call not to my mind what you have done;
'It ſets a debt of that account before me,
'Which ſhews me poor and bankrupt even in hopes.

Zar. 'The faithful Selim, and my women, know
'The danger which I tempted to conceal you.
'You know how I abus'd the cred'lous king;
'What arts I us'd to make you paſs on him,
'When he receiv'd you as the prince of Fez;
'And as my kinſman, honour'd and advanc'd you.'
Oh! why do I relate what I have done?
What did I not? Was't not for you this war
Commenc'd? Not knowing who you were, nor why
You hated Manuel, I urg'd my huſband
To this invaſion; where he late was loſt,
Where all is loſt, and I am made a ſlave.

* Osm. *You pierce my soul—I own it all—But while*
The power is wanting to repay such benefits,
'Tis treble anguish to a generous heart.

Zara. *Repay me with thy heart—What, dost thou start?*
Make no reply! Is this thy gratitude?
Look on me now, from empire fall'n to slavery;
Think on my suff'rings first, then look on me;
Think on the cause of all, then view thyself:
Reflect on Osmyn, and then look on Zara,
The fall'n, the lost, and now the captive Zara,
And now abandon'd——Say, what then is Osmyn?

Osm. A fatal wretch—A huge, stupendous ruin,
That tumbling on its prop, crush'd all beneath,
And bore contiguous palaces to earth.

Zara. Yet thus, thus fall'n, thus levell'd with the vilest,
If I have gain'd thy love, 'tis glorious ruin;
Ruin! 'tis still to reign, and to be more
A queen; for what are riches, empire, power,
But larger means to gratify the will?
The steps on which we tread, to rise and reach
Our wish; and that obtain'd, down with the scaffolding
Of sceptres, crowns, and thrones; they've serv'd their end,
And are, like lumber, to be left and scorn'd.

Osm. Why was I made the instrument to throw
In bonds the frame of this exalted mind?

Zara. We may be free; the conqueror is mine;
In chains unseen I hold him by the heart,
And can unwind and strain him as I please.
Give me thy love, I'll give thee liberty.

Osm. In vain you offer, and in vain require
What neither can bestow. Set free yourself,
And leave a slave the wretch that would be so.

Zara. Thou canst not mean so poorly as thou talk'st.

Osm. Alas! you know me not.

Zara. Not who thou art:
But what this last ingratitude declares,
This groveling baseness—Thou say'st true, I know
Thee not; for what thou art yet wants a name:

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* The lines printed in Italics are not in the original, but are now given to the reader as delivered in the representation at Drury-lane Theatre.

By something so unworthy and so vile,
That to have lov'd thee makes me yet more lost,
Than all the malice of my other fate.
Traitor, monster, cold perfidious slave;
A slave not daring to be free; nor dares
To love above him; for 'tis dangerous.
'Tis that, I know; for thou dost look, with eyes
Sparkling desire, and trembling to possess.
I know my charms have reach'd thy very soul,
And thrill'd thee through with darting fires; but thou
Dost fear so much, thou dar'st not wish.' The king!
There, there's the dreadful sound, the king's thy rival!

Sel. Madam, the king is here, and entering now.

Zara. As I could wish; by Heav'n I'll be reveng'd.

Enter the King, Perez, *and attendants.*

King. Why does the fairest of her kind withdraw
Her shining from the day, to gild this scene
Of death and night? Ha! what disorder's this?
Somewhat I heard of king and rival mention'd.
What's he that dares be rival to the king,
Or lift his eyes to like where I adore? [slave.

Zara. There, he, your prisoner, and that was my

King. How? better than my hopes! Does she accuse him? [*Aside.*

Zara. Am I become so low by my captivity,
And do your arms so lessen what they conquer,
That Zara must be made the sport of slaves?
And shall the wretch, whom yester sun beheld
Waiting my nod, the creature of my pow'r,
Presume to-day to plead audacious love,
And build bold hopes on my dejected fate?

King. Better for him to tempt the rage of Heav'n,
And wrench the bolt red-hissing from the hand
Of him that thunders, than but to think that insolence.
'Tis daring for a god.' Hence to the wheel
With that Ixion, who aspires to hold
Divinity embrac'd; to whips and prisons
Drag him with speed, and rid me of his face.
[*Guards seize* Osmyn, *and exeunt.*

Zara. Compassion led me to bemoan his state,
Whose former fate had merited much more:

And, through my hopes in you, I undertook
He should be set at large; thence sprung his insolence,
And what was charity, he constru'd love.

King. Enough; his punishment be what you please.
But let me lead you from this place of sorrow,
To one where young delights attend, ' and joys,
' Yet new, unborn, and blooming in the bud,
' Which wait to be full-blown at your approach,
' And spread, like roses, to the morning sun:'
Where ev'ry hour shall roll in circling joys,
And love shall wing the tedious-wasting day.
Life, without love, is load; and time stands still:
What we refuse to him, to death we give;
And then, then only, when we love, we live. [*Exeunt.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE, *a prison.*

Osmyn, *with a paper.*

BUT now, and I was clos'd within the tomb
That holds my father's ashes; and but now,
Where he was pris'ner, I am too imprison'd.
Sure 'tis the hand of Heav'n that leads me thus,
And for some purpose points out these remembrances.
In a dark corner of my cell I found
This paper; what it is this light will shew.

" If my Alphonso"——Ha! [*Reading.*
" If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heav'n;
" Give me more weight, crush my declining years
" With bolts, with chains, imprisonment and want;
" But bless my son, visit not him for me.

It is his hand; this was his pray'r——yet more:

" Let ev'ry hair, which sorrow by the roots [*Reading.*
" Tears from my hoary and devoted head,
" Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:
" Not for myself, but him, hear me, all-gracious——

'Tis

'Tis wanting what ſhould follow—Heav'n ſhou'd follow,
But 'tis torn off—Why ſhou'd that word alone
Be torn from this petition? 'Twas to Heav'n,
But Heav'n was deaf, Heav'n heard him not; but thus,
Thus as the name of Heav'n from this is torn,
So did it tear the ears of mercy from
His voice, ſhutting the gates of pray'r againſt him.
If piety be thus debarr'd acceſs
On high, and of good men the very beſt
Is ſingled out to bleed, and bear the ſcourge,
What is reward? Or what is puniſhment?
But who ſhall dare to tax eternal juſtice!
Yet I may think——I may, I muſt; for thought
Precedes the will to think, and error lives
Ere reaſon can be born. 'Reaſon, the power
'To gueſs at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
'Of wand'ring life, that winks and wakes by turns,
'Fooling the follower, betwixt ſhade and ſhining.'
What noiſe! Who's there? My friend? How cam'ſt thou hither?

Enter Heli.

Heli. The time's too precious to be ſpent in telling.
The captain, influenc'd by Almeria's power,
Gave order to the guards for my admittance.

Oſm. How does Almeria? But I know ſhe is
As I am. Tell me, may I hope to ſee her?

Heli. You may. Anon, at midnight, when the king
Is gone to reſt, and Garcia is retir'd,
'(Who takes the privilege to viſit late,
'Preſuming on a bridegroom's right)' ſhe'll come.

Oſm. She'll come; 'tis what I wiſh, yet what I fear.
She'll come; but whither, and to whom? Oh, Heav'n!
To a vile priſon, and a captive wretch;
To one, whom, had ſhe never known, ſhe had
Been happy. Why, why was that heav'nly creature
Abandon'd o'er to love what Heav'n forſakes?
Why does ſhe follow, with unwearied ſteps,
One, who has tir'd misfortune with purſuing?
'One driven about the world, like blaſted leaves
'And chaff, the ſport of adverſe winds; 'till late,

'At

'At length impriſon'd in ſome cleft of rock,
'On earth it reſts, and rots to ſilent duſt.'

Heli. Have hopes, and hear the voice of better fate.
I've learn'd there are diſorders ripe for mutiny
Among the troops, who thought to ſhare the plunder,
Which Manuel to his own uſe and avarice
Converts. This news has reach'd Valentia's frontiers,
Where many of your ſubjects, long oppreſs'd
With tyranny, and grievous impoſitions,
Are riſen in arms, and call for chiefs to head
And lead them to regain their rights and liberty.

Oſm. By Heav'n thou'aſt rous'd me from my lethargy
The ſpirit which was deaf to my own wrongs,
And the loud cries of my dead father's blood,
'Deaf to revenge—nay, which refus'd to hear
'The piercing ſighs and murmurs of my love
'Yet unenjoy'd; what not Almeria could
'Revive or raiſe,' my people's voice has waken'd.

Heli. Our poſture of affairs, and ſcanty time
My lord, require you ſhould compoſe yourſelf.

Oſm. Oh, my Antonio! I am all on fire;
My ſoul is up in arms, ready to charge
And bear amidſt the foe with conqu'ring troops.
I hear 'em call to lead 'em on to liberty,
To victory; their ſhouts and clamours rend
My ears, and reach the Heav'ns. Where is the king?
Where is Alphonſo? Ha! where? where indeed?
Oh, I could tear and burſt the ſtrings of life,
To break theſe chains. Off, off, ye ſtains of royalty;
Off, ſlavery. Oh, curſe! that I alone
Can beat and flutter in my cage, when I
Would ſoar and ſtoop at victory beneath.

Heli. *Abate this ardour, Sir, or we are loſt.*
Zara, the cauſe of your reſtraint, may be
The means of liberty reſtor'd. That gain'd,
Occaſion will not fail to point out ways
For your eſcape. Mean time, I've thought already
With ſpeed and ſafety to convey myſelf,
Where not far off ſome malcontents hold council
Nightly, who hate this tyrant; ſome, who love

Anſelmo's memory, and will, for certain,
When they ſhall know you live, aſſiſt your cauſe.
Oſm. My friend and counſellor, as thou think'ſt fit,
So do. I will, with patience, wait my fortune.
Heli. When Zara comes, abate of your averſion.
Oſm. I hate her not, nor can diſſemble love:
But as I may I'll do. 'I have a paper
'Which I would ſhew thee, friend, but that the ſight
'Would hold thee here, and clog thy expedition.
'Within I found it, by my father's hand
''Twas writ; a pray'r for me, wherein appears
'Paternal love prevailing o'er his ſorrows;
'Such ſanctity, ſuch tenderneſs, ſo mix'd
'With grief, as would draw tears from inhumanity.
'*Heli.* The care of Providence ſure left it there,
'To arm your mind with hope. Such piety
'Was never heard in vain. Heav'n has in ſtore
'For you thoſe bleſſings it witheld from him.
'In that aſſurance live; which time, I hope,
'And our next meeting will confirm.
Oſm. Farewel,
My friend; the good thou doſt deſerve, attend thee.
[*Exit* Heli.
I've been to blame, and queſtion'd with impiety
The care of Heav'n. Not ſo my father bore
More anxious grief. This ſhould have better taught me;
'This leſſon, in ſome hour of inſpiration
'By him ſet down, when his pure thoughts were borne,
'Like fumes of ſacred incenſe o'er the clouds,
'And wafted thence, on angel's wings, thro' ways
'Of light, to the bright ſource of all. For there
'He in the book of preſcience ſaw this day;
'And waking to the world and mortal ſenſe,
'Left this example of his reſignation,'
This his laſt legacy to me: which, here,
I'll treaſure as more worth than diadems,
Or all extended rule of regal pow'r.
Enter Zara, *veil'd.*
Oſm. What brightneſs breaks upon me thus through ſhades,
And promiſes a day to this dark dwelling?
Is it my love?—

Zara.

Zara. Oh, that thy heart had taught [*Lifting her v.*
Thy tongue that saying!
Osm. Zara! I am betray'd by my surprize.
Zara. What, does my face displease thee?
That, having seen it, thou dost turn thy eyes
Away, as from deformity and horror?
If so, this sable curtain shall again
Be drawn, and I will stand before thee, seeing,
And unseen. Is it my love? Ask again
That question; speak again in that soft voice;
And look again with wishes in thy eyes.
Oh, no! thou canst not, for thou seest me now,
As she whose savage breast hath been the cause
Of these thy wrongs; as she whose barb'rous rage
Has loaded thee with chains and galling irons.
'Well dost thou scorn me, and upbraid my falseness;
'Could one who lov'd, thus torture whom she lov'd?
'No, no, it must be hatred, dire revenge,
'And detestation, that could use thee thus.
'So dost thou think; then do but tell me so;
'Tell me, and thou shalt see how I'll revenge
'Thee on this false one, how I'll stab and tear
'This heart of flint, 'till it shall bleed; and thou
'Shalt weep for mine, forgetting thy own miseries.'
Osm. You wrong me, beauteous Zara, to believe
I bear my fortunes with so low a mind,
'As still to meditate revenge on all
'Whom chance, or fate, working by secret causes,
'Has made, per-force, subservient to the end
'The heav'nly pow'rs allot me;' no, not you,
But destiny and inauspicious stars
Have cast me down to this low being. Or
Granting you had, from you I have deserv'd it.
Zara. Canst thou forgive me then? wilt thou believe
So kindly of my fault, to call it madness?
Oh, give that madness yet a milder name,
And call it passion! then, be still more kind,
And call that passion love.
Osm. Give it a name,
Or being, as you please, such I will think it. [ness,
Zara. Oh, thou dost wound me more with this thy good-

Than

Than e'er thou couldst with bitterest reproaches;
Thy anger could not pierce thus to my heart.
Osm. Yet I could wish——
Zara. Haste me to know it; what?
Osm. That at this time I had not been this thing.
Zara. What thing?
Osm. This slave.
Zara. Oh, Heav'n my fears interpret
This thy silence; somewhat of high concern,
Long fashioning within thy labouring mind,
And now just ripe for birth, my rage has ruin'd.
Have I done this? Tell me, am I so curs'd?
Osm. Time may have still one fated hour to come,
Which, wing'd with liberty, might overtake
Occasion past.
Zara. Swift as occasion, I
Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn,
Wake thee to freedom. 'Now 'tis late; and yet
Some news few minutes past, arriv'd, which seem'd
To shake the temper of the king—Who knows
What racking cares disease a monarch's bed?
Or love, that late at night still lights his lamp,
And strikes his rays thro' dusk and folded lids,
Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour.
I'll try.
Osm. I have not merited this grace;
Nor, should my secret purpose take effect,
Can I repay, as you require, such benefits.
Zara. Thou canst not owe me more, nor have I more
To give, than I've already lost. But now,
So does the form of our engagements rest,
Thou hast the wrong till I redeem thee hence;
That done, I leave thy justice to return
My love. Adieu. [*Exit.*
Osm. This woman has a soul
Of godlike mould, intrepid and commanding,
And challenges, in spite of me, my best
Esteem; 'to this, she's fair, few more can boast
'Of personal charms, or with less vanity
'Might hope to captivate the hearts of kings;'

But

But she has passions which outstrip the wind,
And tear her virtues up, as tempests root
The sea. I fear, when she shall know the truth,
Some swift and dire event of her blind rage
Will make all fatal. But behold, she comes
For whom I fear, to shield me from my fears,
The cause and comfort of my boding heart.

Enter Almeria.

My life, my health, my liberty, my all!
How shall I welcome thee to this sad place?
How speak to thee the words of joy and transport?
How run into thy arms, withheld by fetters;
Or take thee into mine, while I'm thus manacled
And pinion'd like a thief or murderer?
Shall I not hurt or bruise thy tender body,
And stain thy bosom with the rust of these
Rude irons? Must I meet thee thus, Almeria?

Alm. Thus, thus; we parted, thus to meet again.
Thou told'st me thou would'st think how we might meet
To part no more——Now we will part no more;
For these thy chains, or death, shall join us ever.

'*Osm.* Hard means to ratify thy word!—Oh, cruelty!
'That ever I should think beholding thee
'A torture!—Yet, such is the bleeding anguish
'Of my heart, to see thy sufferings——Oh, Heav'n!
'That I could almost turn my eyes away,
'Or wish thee from my sight.

'*Alm.* Oh, say not so!
'Tho' 'tis because thou lov'st me. Do not say,
'On any terms, that thou dost wish me from thee.
'No, no, 'tis better thus, that we together
'Feed on each other's heart, devour our woes
'With mutual appetite; and mingling in
'One cup the common stream of both our eyes,
'Drink bitter draughts, with never-slaking thirst;
'Thus better, than for any cause to part.
'What dost thou think? Look not so tenderly
'Upon me—speak, and take me in thy arms——
'Thou canst not; thy poor arms are bound, and strive
'In vain with thy remorseless chains, which gnaw
'And eat into thy flesh, fest'ring thy limbs
'With rankling rust.'

Osm.

Osm. Oh! O———

Alm. Give me that sigh.
Why dost thou heave, and stifle in thy griefs?
Thy heart will burst, thy eyes look red, and start;
Give thy soul way, and tell me thy dark thought.

Osm. For this world's rule, I would not wound thy breast
With such a dagger as then stuck my heart.

Alm. Why? why? To know it, cannot wound me more
Than knowing thou hast felt it. Tell it me,
—Thou giv'st me pain with too much tenderness.

Osm. And thy excessive love distracts my sense.
Oh, wouldst thou be less killing, soft, or kind,
Grief could not double thus his darts against me.

Alm. Thou dost me wrong, and grief too robs my heart,
If there he shoot not every other shaft;
Thy second self shou'd feel each other wound,
And woe should be in equal portions dealt.
I am thy wife—

Osm. Oh, thou hast search'd too deep:
There, there I bleed; there pull the cruel cords,
That strain my cracking nerves; engines and wheels,
That piece-meal grind, are beds of down and balm
To that soul-racking thought.

Alm. Then I am curs'd
Indeed, if that be so; if I'm thy torment,
Kill me, then, kill me, dash me with thy chains,
Tread on me: 'What, am I the bosom-snake
'That sucks thy warm life-blood, and gnaws thy heart;
'Oh, that thy words had force to break those bonds,
'As they have strength to tear this heart in sunder;
'So shou'dst thou be at large from all oppression.'
Am I, am I of all thy woes the worst?

Osm. My all of bliss, my everlasting life,
Soul of my soul, and end of all my wishes,
Why dost thou thus unman me with thy words,
'And melt me down to mingle with thy weepings?
'Why dost thou ask? Why dost thou talk thus piercingly?'
Thy sorrows have disturb'd thy peace of mind,
And thou dost speak of miseries impossible.

Alm. Didst not thou say that racks and wheels were balm
And beds of ease, to thinking me thy wife?

Osm. No, no; nor shou'd the subtlest pains that hell
Or hell-born malice can invent, extort
A wish or thought from me to have thee other.
But thou wilt know what harrows up my heart:
Thou art my wife——nay, thou art yet my bride——
The sacred union of connubial love
Yet unaccompliſh'd: 'his mysterious rites
'Delay'd; nor has our hymeneal torch
'Yet lighted up his last most grateful sacrifice;
'But dash'd with rain from eyes, and swal'd with sighs,
'Burns dim, and glimmers with expiring light.'
Is this dark cell a temple for that god?
Or this vile earth an altar for such offerings?
This den for slaves, this dungeon damp'd with woes;
'Is this our marriage bed? are these our joys?'
Is this to call thee mine? Oh, hold, my heart!
To call thee mine? Yes; thus even thus to call
Thee mine, were comfort, joy, extremest extasy.
But, Oh, thou art not mine, not e'en in misery;
And 'tis deny'd to me to be so bless'd,
As to be wretched with thee.

Alm. No; not that
Th' extremest malice of our fate can hinder:
That still is left us, and on that we'll feed,
As on the leavings of calamity.
There we will feast and smile on past distress,
And hug, in scorn of it, or mutual ruin.

Osm. Oh, thou dost talk, my love, as one resolv'd,
Because not knowing danger. But look forward;
Think of to-morrow, when thou shalt be torn
From these weak, struggling, unextended arms:
Think how my heart will heave, and eyes will strain,
To grasp and reach what is deny'd my hands:
'Think how the blood will start, and tears will gush,
'To follow thee, my separating soul.'
Think how I am, when thou shalt wed with Garcia!
Then will I smear these walls with blood, disfigure
And dash my face, and rive my clotted hair,
Break on this flinty floor my throbbing breast,
And grovel with gash'd hands to scratch a grave,
'Stripping my nails to tear this pavement up,'
And bury me alive.

Alm.

Alm. Heart-breaking horror!
Ofm. Then Garcia ſhall lie panting on thy boſom,
Luxurious, revelling amidſt thy charms;
'And thou per-force muſt yield, and aid his tranſport.'
Hell! Hell! have I not cauſe to rage and rave?
What are all racks, and wheels, and whips to this?
'Are they not ſoothing ſoftneſs, ſinking eaſe,
'And wafting air to this?' Oh, my Almeria!
What do the damn'd endure, but to deſpair,
But knowing Heav'n, to know it loſt for ever?
Alm. Oh, I am ſtruck; thy words are bolts of ice,
Which ſhot into my breaſt, now melt and chill me.
'I chatter, ſhake, and faint with thrilling fears.
'No, hold me not——Oh, let us not ſupport,
'But ſink each other, deeper yet, down, down,
'Where levell'd low, no more we'll lift our eyes,
'But prone, and dumb, rot the firm face of earth
'With rivers of inceſſant ſcalding rain.'

Enter Zara, Perez, Selim.

Zar. Somewhat of weight to me requires his freedom?
Dare you diſpute the king's command? Behold
The royal ſignet.
Per. I obey; yet beg
Your majeſty one moment to defer
Your ent'ring, 'till the princeſs is return'd
From viſiting the noble priſoner.
Zar. Ha!
What ſay'ſt thou?
Ofm. We are loſt! undone! diſcover'd!
'Retire, my life, with ſpeed——Alas, we're ſeen:'
Speak of compaſſion, let her hear you ſpeak
Of interceding for me with the king;
Saying ſomething quickly to conceal our loves,
If poſſible——
Alm.——I cannot ſpeak.
Ofm. Let me
Conduct you forth, as not perceiving her,
But till ſhe's gone; then bleſs me thus again.
Zar. Trembling and weeping as he leads her forth!
Confuſion in his face, and grief in hers!
'Tis plain I've been abus'd—'Death and deſtruction!
'How ſhall I ſearch into this myſtery?

' The blueſt blaſt of peſtilential air
' Strike, damp, deaden her charms, and kill his eyes;'
Perdition catch 'em both, and ruin part 'em.

Oſm. This charity to one unknown, and thus
[*Aloud to* Almeria *as ſhe goes out.*
Diſtreſs'd, Heav'n will repay; all thanks are poor.
[*Exit* Almeria.

Zar. Damn'd, damn'd diſſembler! Yet I will be calm,
Choak in my rage, and know the utmoſt depth
Of this deceiver——You ſeem much ſurpriz'd.

Oſm. At your return ſo ſoon and unexpected!

Zara. And ſo unwiſh'd, unwanted too it ſeems.
Confuſion! Yet I will contain myſelf.
You're grown a favourite ſince laſt we parted;
Perhaps I'm ſaucy and intruding——

Oſm.——Madam!

Zara. I did not know the princeſs' favourite.
Your pardon, Sir——miſtake me not; you think
I'm angry; you're deceiv'd. I came to ſet
You free; but ſhall return much better pleas'd,
To find you have an intereſt ſuperior.

Oſm. You do not come to mock my miſeries?

Zar. I do.

Oſm. I could at this time ſpare your mirth.

Zar. I know thou couldſt; but I'm not often pleas'd.
And will indulge it now. What miſeries?
Who would not be thus happily confin'd,
To be the care of weeping majeſty;
To have contending queens, at dead of night,
Forſake their down, to wake with wat'ry eyes,
And watch like tapers o'er your hours of reſt?
Oh, curſe! I cannot hold——

Oſm. Come, 'tis too much.

Zar. Villain!

Oſm. How, Madam!

Zar. Thou ſhalt die.

Oſm. I thank you. [live.

Zar. Thou ly'ſt, for now I know for whom thou'dſt

Oſm. Then you may know for whom I die.

Zar. Hell! Hell!
Yet I'll be calm——Dark and unknown betrayer!

But

But now the dawn begins, and the ſlow hand
Of Fate is ſtretch'd to draw the veil, and leave
Thee bare, the naked mark of public view.
Oſm. You may be ſtill deceiv'd, 'tis in my pow'r——
Chain'd as I am, to fly from all my wrongs
And free myſelf, at once, from miſery,
And you of me.
Zar. Ha! ſay'ſt thou—but I'll prevent it——
Who waits there? As you will anſwer it, look this ſlave [*To the guard.*
Attempt no means to make himſelf away.
I've been deceiv'd. The public ſafety now
Requires he ſhou'd be more confin'd, and none,
No, not the princeſs, ſuffer'd or to ſee
Or ſpeak with him. I'll quit you to the king.
Vile and ingrate! too late thou ſhalt repent
The baſe injuſtice thou haſt done my love:
Yes, thou ſhalt know, ſpite of thy paſt diſtreſs,
And all thoſe ills which thou ſo long haſt mourn'd;
Heav'n has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor hell a fury like a woman ſcorn'd. *Exeunt.*

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE, *a room of ſtate.*

Zara, Selim.

ZARA.

THOU haſt already rack'd me with thy ſtay;
Therefore require me not to aſk thee twice:
Reply at once to all. What is concluded?
Sel. Your accuſation highly has incens'd
The king, and were alone enough to urge
The fate of Oſmyn; but to that, freſh news
Has ſince arriv'd, of more revolted troops.
'Tis certain Heli too is fled, and with him
(Which breeds amazement and diſtraction) ſome
Who bore high offices of weight and truſt,
Both in the ſtate and army. This confirms
The king in full belief of all you told him

Concerning Oſmyn, and his correſpondence
With them who firſt began the mutiny.
Wherefore a warrant for his death is ſign'd;
And order given for public execution.

Zar. Ha! haſte thee! fly, prevent his fate and mine;
Find out the king, tell him I have of weigh
More than his crown t'impart ere Oſmyn die.

Sel. It needs not, for the king will ſtraight be here,
And as to your revenge, not his own int'reſt,
Pretend to ſacrifice the life of Oſmyn.

Zar. What ſhall I ſay? Invent, contrive, adviſe
Somewhat to blind the king, and ſave his life,
In whom I live. ‘ Spite of my rage and pride,
‘ I am a woman, and a lover ſtill.
‘ Oh! 'tis more grief but to ſuppoſe his death,
‘ Than ſtill to meet the rigour of his ſcorn.
‘ From my deſpair my anger had its ſource;
‘ When he is dead I muſt deſpair for ever.
‘ For ever! that's deſpair——it was diſtruſt
‘ Before; diſtruſt will ever be in love,
‘ And anger in diſtruſt; both ſhort-liv'd pains.
‘ But in deſpair, and ever-during death,
‘ No term, no bound, but infinite of woe.
‘ Oh, torment, but to think! what then to bear?
‘ Not to be borne'——Deviſe the means to ſhun it,
Quick; or, by Heav'n, this dagger drinks thy blood.

Sel. My life is yours, nor wiſh I to preſerve it,
But to ſerve you. I have already thought.

Zar. Forgive my rage; I know thy love and truth.
But ſay, what's to be done? or when, or how,
Shall I prevent or ſtop th' approaching danger?

Sel. You muſt ſtill ſeem moſt reſolute and fix'd
On Oſmyn's death; too quick a change of mercy
Might breed ſuſpicion of the cauſe. Adviſe
That execution may be done in private.

Zar. On what pretence?

Sel. Your own requeſt's enough.
However, for a colour, tell him, you
Have cauſe to fear his guards may be corrupted,
And ſome of them bought off to Oſmyn's intereſt,
Who at the place of execution will
Attempt to force his way for an eſcape;

The ſtate of things will countenance all ſuſpicions.
Then offer to the king to have him ſtrangled
In ſecret by your mutes; and get an order,
That none but mutes may have admittance to him.
I can no more, the king is here. Obtain
This grant, and I'll acquaint you with the reſt.

Enter King, Gonſalez, *and* Perez.

King. Bear to the dungeon thoſe rebellious ſlaves,
'Th' ignoble curs, that yelp to fill the cry,
'And ſpend their mouths in barking tyranny.'
But for their leaders, Sancho and Ramirez,
Let 'em be led away to preſent death.
Perez, ſee it perform'd.

Gonſ. Might I preſume,
Their execution better were deferr'd,
'Till Oſmyn die. Mean time we may learn more
Of this conſpiracy.

King. Then be it ſo.
Stay, ſoldier; they ſhall ſuffer with the Moor.
Are none return'd of thoſe that follow'd Heli?

Gonſ. None, Sir. Some papers have been ſince diſcover'd
In Roderigo's houſe, who fled with him,
Which ſeem to intimate, as if Alphonſo
Were ſtill alive, and arming in Valentia:
Which wears indeed this colour of a truth,
They who are fled have that way bent their courſe.
Of the ſame nature divers notes have been
Diſpers'd t'amuſe the people; whereupon
Some, ready of belief, have rais'd this rumour:
That being ſav'd upon the coaſt of Afric,
He there diſclos'd himſelf to Albucacim,
And by a ſecret compact made with him,
Open'd and urg'd the way to this invaſion;
While he himſelf, returning to Valentia
In private, undertook to raiſe this tumult.

Zar. Ha! hear'ſt thou that? Is Oſmyn then Alphonſo?
'Oh, heav'n! a thouſand things occur at once
'To my remembrance now, that make it plain.'
Oh, certain death for him, as ſure deſpair
For me, if it be known——If not, what hope
Have I? Yet 'twere the loweſt baſeneſs now,

To

To yield him up—No, I will conceal him,
And try the force of yet more obligations.

Gonſ. 'Tis not impoſſible. Yet it may be
That ſome impoſtor has uſurp'd his name.
Your beauteous captive Zara can inform,
If ſuch an one, ſo 'ſcaping, was receiv'd,
At any time in Albucacim's court.

King. Pardon, fair excellence, this long neglect:
An unforeſeen, unwelcome hour of buſineſs,
Has thruſt between us and our while of love;
But wearing now apace with ebbing ſand,
Will quickly waſte and give again the day.

Zar. You're too ſecure: the danger is more imminent
Than your high courage ſuffers you to ſee;
While Oſmyn lives, you are not ſafe.

King. His doom
Is paſs'd, if you revoke it not, he dies.

Zar. 'Tis well. By what I heard upon your entrance,
I find I can unfold what yet concerns
You more. One, who did call himſelf Alphonſo,
Was caſt upon my coaſt, as is reported,
And oft had private conference with the king;
To what effect I knew not then: but he,
Alphonſo, ſecretly departed, juſt
About the time our arms embark'd for Spain.
What I know more is, that a triple league
Of ſtricteſt friendſhip was profeſt between
Alphonſo, Heli, and the traitor Oſmyn.

King. Public report is ratify'd in this.

Zar. And Oſmyn's death requir'd of ſtrong neceſſity.

King. Give order ſtrait, that all the pris'ners die.

Zar. Forbear a moment, ſomewhat more I have
Worthy your private ear, and this your miniſter.

King. Let all, except Gonſalez, leave the room.
[*Exit* Perez, *&c.*

Zar. I am your captive, and you've us'd me nobly;
And in return of that, tho' otherwiſe
Your enemy, 'I have diſcover'd Oſmyn
'His private practice and conſpiracy
'Againſt your ſtate: and fully to diſcharge
'Myſelf of what I've undertaken, now'
I think it fit to tell you, that your guards

Are

Are tainted; ſome among 'em have reſolv'd
To reſcue Oſmyn at the place of death.
King. Is treaſon then ſo near us as our guards?
Zar. Moſt certain; tho' my knowledge is not yet
So ripe, to point at the particular men.
King. What's to be done?
Zar. That too I will adviſe.
I have remaining in my train ſome mutes,
A preſent once from the ſultana queen,
In the grand ſignior's court. Theſe from their infancy
Are practic'd in the trade of death; and ſhall
(As their cuſtom is) in private ſtrangle
Oſmyn.
Gonſ. My lord, the queen adviſes well.
King. What off'ring, or what recompence remains
In me, that can be worthy ſo great ſervices?
To caſt beneath your feet the crown you've ſav'd,
Tho' on the head that wears it, were too little.
Zar. Of that hereafter: but, mean time, 'tis fit
You give ſtrict charge, that none may be admitted
To ſee the pris'ner, but ſuch mutes as I
Shall ſend.
King. Who waits there?

Enter Perez.

King. On your life, take heed
That only Zara's mutes, or ſuch who bring
Her warrant, have admittance to the Moor.
Zar. They, and no other, not the princeſs' ſelf.
Per. Your majeſty ſhall be obey'd.
King. Retire. [*Exit* Perez.
Gonſ. That interdiction ſo particular
Pronounc'd with vehemence againſt the princeſs,
Shou'd have more meaning than appears barefac'd.
This king is blinded by his love, and heeds
It not. [*Aſide.*]—Your majeſty ſure might have ſpar'd
The laſt reſtraint: you hardly can ſuſpect
The princeſs is confed'rate with the Moor.
Zar. I've heard her charity did once extend
So far, to viſit him at his requeſt.
Gonſ. Ha!
King. How! She viſit Oſmyn! What, my daughter?
Sel. Madam, take heed; or you have ruin'd all.

Zar.

Zar. And after did ſolicit you on his
Behalf.——

King. Never. You have been miſinform'd.

Zar. Indeed! Then 'twas a whiſper ſpread by ſome
Who wiſh'd it ſo; a common art in courts.
I will retire and inſtantly prepare
Inſtruction for my miniſters of death.

[*Exit* Zara *and* Selima.

Gonſ. There's ſomewhat yet of myſtery in this;
Her words and actions are obſcure and double,
Sometimes concur, and ſometimes diſagree:
I like it not. [*Aſide.*

King. What doſt thou think, Gonſalez?
Are we not much indebted to this fair one?

Gonſ. I am a little ſlow of credit, Sir,
In the ſincerity of woman's actions.
Methinks this lady's hatred to the Moor
Diſquiets her too much; which makes it ſeem
As if ſhe'd rather that ſhe did not hate him.
I wiſh her mutes are meant to be employ'd
As ſhe pretends—I doubt it now—Your guards
Corrupted! How? By whom? Who told her ſo?
I'th' evening Oſmyn was to die; at midnight
She begg'd the royal ſignet to releaſe him;
I'th' morning he muſt die again; ere noon
Her mutes alone muſt ſtrangle him, or he'll
Eſcape. This put together ſuits not well.

King. Yet that there's truth in what ſhe has diſcover'd
Is manifeſt from every circumſtance.
This tumult, and the lords who fled with Heli,
Are confirmation;——that Alphonſo lives,
Agrees expreſſly too with her report.

Gonſ. I grant it, Sir; and doubt not, but in rage
Of jealouſy, ſhe has diſcover'd what
She now repents. It may be I'm deceiv'd.
But why that needleſs caution of the princeſs?
What if ſhe had ſeen Oſmyn? Tho' t'were ſtrange;
But if ſhe had, what was't to her? Unleſs
She fear'd her ſtronger charms might cauſe the Moor's
Affection to revolt.

King. I thank thee, friend.

There's

There's reaſon in thy doubt, and I am warn'd.—
But think'ſt thou that my daughter ſaw this Moor?
Gonſ. If Oſmyn be, as Zara has related,
Alphonſo's friend, 'tis not impoſſible
But ſhe might wiſh, on his account, to ſee him.
King. Say'ſt thou? By Heav'n, thou haſt rous'd a thought,
That like a ſudden earthquake ſhakes my frame.
Confuſion! then my daughter's an accomplice,
And plots in private with this helliſh Moor.
Gonſ. That were too hard a thought——but ſee, ſhe comes—
'Twere not amiſs to queſtion her a little,
And try, howe'er, if I've divin'd aright.
If what I fear be true, ſhe'll be concern'd
For Oſmyn's death, as he's Alphonſo's friend:
Urge that, to try if ſhe'll ſolicit for him.

Enter Almeria *and* Leonora.

King. Your coming has prevented me, Almeria;
I had determined to have ſent for you.
Let your attendant be diſmiſs'd; I have [Leonora *retires.*
To talk with you. Come near; why doſt thou ſhake?
What mean thoſe ſwoll'n and red-fleck'd eyes, that look
As they had wept in blood, and worn the night
In waking anguiſh? Why this on the day
Which was deſign'd to celebrate thy nuptials;
But that the beams of light are to be ſtain'd
With reeking gore, from traitors on the rack?
Wherefore I have deferr'd the mariage-rites;
Nor ſhall the guilty horrors of this day
Prophane that jubilee.
Alm. All days to me
Henceforth are equal: this, the day of death,
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows
Will undiſtinguiſh'd roll, and but prolong
One hated line of more extended woe.
King. Whence is thy grief? Give me to know the cauſe;
And look thou anſwer me with truth; for know
I am not unacquainted with thy falſhood.
Why art thou mute? Baſe and degen'rate maid!
Gonſ. Dear Madam, ſpeak, or you'll incenſe the King.
Alm. What is't to ſpeak? Or wherefore ſhould I ſpeak?
What mean theſe tears but grief unutterable?

King.

King. They are the dumb confeſſions of thy guilty mind ;
They mean thy guilt: and ſay thou wert confed'rate
With damn'd conſpirators to take my life.
Oh, impious parricide! Now canſt thou ſpeak?

Alm O earth, behold, I kneel upon thy boſom,
And bend my flowing eyes to ſtream upon
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield ;
Open thy bowels of compaſſion, take
Into thy womb the laſt and moſt forlorn
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent
——I have no parent elſe—be thou a mother,
And ſtep between me and the curſe of him
Who was—who was, but is no more a father ;
But brands my innocence with horrid crimes ;
And for the tender names of child and daughter,
Now calls me murderer and parricide.

King. Riſe, I command thee—and if thou would
Acquit thyſelf of thoſe deteſted names,
Swear thou haſt never ſeen that foreign dog,
Now doom'd to die, that moſt accurſed Oſmyn.

Alm. Never, but as with innocence I might,
And free of all bad purpoſes. So Heaven's
My witneſs.

King. Vile equivocating wretch!
With innocence! Oh, patience! hear—ſhe owns it!
Confeſſes it! By Heav'n, I'll have him rack'd,
Torn, mangled, flay'd, impal'd—all pains and tortures
That wit of man and dire revenge can think,
Shall he, accumulated, underbear.

Alm. Oh, I am loſt.——There fate begins to wound.

King. Hear me, then; if thou canſt reply; know, traitreſs,
I'm not to learn that curs'd Alphonſo lives ;
Nor am I ignorant what Oſmyn is——

Alm. Then all is ended, and we both muſt die.
Since thou'rt reveal'd, alone thou ſhalt not die.
And yet alone would I have dy'd, Heav'n knows,
Repeated deaths, rather than have reveal'd thee.
' Yes, all my father's wounding wrath, tho' each
' Reproach cuts deeper than the keeneſt ſword,
' And cleaves my heart, I wou'd have borne it all,

' Nay

' Nay all the pains that are prepar'd for thee ;
' To the remorſeleſs rack I wou'd have giv'n
' This weak and tender fleſh, to have been bruis'd
' And torn, rather than have reveal'd thy being.'
King. Hell, hell! Do I hear this, and yet endure!
What, dar'ſt thou to my face avow thy guilt?
Hence, ere I curſe—fly my juſt rage with ſpeed ;
Leſt I forget us both, and ſpurn thee from me.
Alm. And yet a father! Think, I am your child!
Turn not your eyes away—look on me kneeling ;
Now curſe me if you can, now ſpurn me off.
Did ever father curſe his kneeling child?
Never ; for always bleſſings crown that poſture.
' Nature inclines, and half way meets that duty,
' Stooping to raiſe from earth the filial reverence ;
' For bended knees returning folding arms,
' With pray'rs, and bleſſings, and paternal love.'
Oh, hear me then, thus crawling on the earth———
King. Be thou adviſ'd, and let me go, while yet
The light impreſſion thou haſt made remains.
Alm. No, never will I riſe, nor loſe this hold,
'Till you are mov'd, and grant that he may live.
King. Ha! Who may live? Take heed! No more of that ;
For on my ſoul he dies, tho' thou and I,
And all ſhou'd follow to partake his doom.
Away, off, let me go——Call her attendants.
[Leonora *and women return.*
Alm. Drag me ; harrow the earth with my bare boſom ;
I will not go 'till you have ſpar'd my huſband.
King. Ha! ' What ſay'ſt thou?' Huſband! ' Huſband! damnation!
' What huſband!' Which? Who?
Alm. He, he is my huſband.
King. ' Poiſon and daggers!' Who?
Alm. Oh——— [*Faints.*
' *Conſ.* Help, ſupport her.'
Alm. Let me go, let me fall, ſink deep—I'll dig,
I'll dig a grave, and tear up death ; ' I will ;
' I'll ſcrape, 'till I collect his rotten bones,
' And cloath their nakedneſs with my own fleſh ;'
Yes, I will ſtrip off life, and we will change :

I will be death; then, tho' you kill my husband,
He shall be mine still, and for ever mine.

King. What husband? Whom dost thou mean?

Gonsf. She raves!

Alm. 'Oh, that I did.' Osmyn, he is my husband.

King. Osmyn!

Alm. Not Osmyn, but Alphonso, is my dear
And wedded husband——Heav'n, and air, and seas,
Ye winds and waves, I call ye all to witness.

King. Wilder than winds or waves thyself dost rave.
Shou'd I hear more, I too shou'd catch thy madness.
'Yet somewhat she must mean of dire import,
'Which I'll not hear, 'till I am more at peace.'
Watch her returning sense, and bring me word;
And look that she attempt not on her life. [*Exit* King.

Alm. Oh, stay, yet stay; hear me, I am not mad.
I wou'd to Heav'n I were——He's gone.

Gonsf. Have comfort.

Alm. Curs'd be that tongue that bids me be of comfort;
Curs'd my own tongue, that could not move his pity;
Curs'd these weak hands, that could not hold him here;
For he is gone to doom Alphonso's death.

Gonsf. Your too excessive grief works on your fancy,
And deludes your sense. Alphonso, if living,
Is far from hence, beyond your father's pow'r.

Alm. Hence, thou detested, ill-tim'd flatterer;
Source of my woes: thou and thy race be curs'd;
But doubly thou, who couldst alone have policy
And fraud to find the fatal secret out,
And know that Osmyn was Alphonso.

Gonsf. Ha!

Alm. Why dost thou start? What dost thou see or hear?
Was it the doleful bell, tolling for death?
Or dying groans from my Alphonso's breast?
See, see, look yonder! where a grizzled, pale,
And ghastly herd glares by, all smear'd with blood,
Gasping as it would speak; and after, see;
Behold a damp, dead hand has dropp'd a dagger:
I'll catch it—Hark! a voice cries murder! ah!
My father's voice! 'tis hollow it sounds, and calls

Me

Me from the tomb—I'll follow it; for there
I shall again behold my dear Alphonso.
[*Exeunt* Almeria *and* Leonora.

Gonsa. She's greatly griev'd; nor am I less surpriz'd.
Osmyn, Alphonso! No; she over rates
My policy; I ne'er suspected it:
Nor now had known it, but from her mistake.
Her husband too! Ha! Where is Garcia then?
And where the crown that shou'd descend on him,
To grace the line of my posterity?
Hold, let me think——if I should tell the king——
Things come to this extremity: his daughter
Wedded already——what if he should yield?
Knowing no remedy for what is past,
And urg'd by nature pleading for his child,
With which he seems to be already shaken.
And tho' I know he hates beyond the grave
Anselmo's race; yet if——that I concludes me.
To doubt, when I may be assur'd, is folly.
But how prevent the captive queen, who means
To set him free? Ay, now 'tis plain. O well
Invented tale! He was Alphonso's friend.
This subtle woman will amuse the king.
If I delay——'twill do——or better so.
One to my wish. Alonzo, thou art welcome.

Enter Alonzo.

Alon. The king expects your lordship.

Gonsa. 'Tis no matter.
I'm not i'the way at present, good Alonzo.

Alon. If't please your lordship, I'll return, and say
I have not seen you.

Gonsa. Do, my best Alonzo.
Yet stay, I would——but go; anon will serve——
Yet I have that requires thy speedy help.
I think thou wou'dst not stop to do me service.

Alon. I am your creature.

Gonsa. Say thou art my friend.
I've seen thy sword do noble execution.

Alon. All that it can your lordship shall command.

Gonsa. Thanks; and I take thee at thy word. Thou'st
Amongst the followers of the captive queen, [seen,
Dumb men, who make their meaning known by signs.

Alon. I have, my lord.

Gon. Couldſt thou procure, with ſpeed
And privacy, the wearing garb of one
Of thoſe, tho' purchas'd by his death, I'd give
Thee ſuch reward, as ſhou'd exceed thy wiſh. [ſhip?

Alon. Conclude it done. Where ſhall I wait your lord-

Gon. At my apartment. Uſe thy utmoſt diligence;
And ſay I've not been ſeen--Haſte, good Alonzo. [*Ex.* Al.
So, this can hardly fail. Alphonſo ſlain,
The greateſt obſtacle is then remov'd.
Almeria widow'd, yet again may wed;
And I yet fix the crown on Garcia's head. [*Exit.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE, *a room of ſtate.*

Enter King, Perez, *and* Alonzo.

KING.

NOT to be found! In an ill hour he's abſent.
None, ſay you? none! What, not the fav'rite eunuch?
Nor ſhe herſelf, nor any of her mutes,
Have yet requir'd admittance?

Per. None, my lord.

King. Is Oſmyn ſo diſpos'd as I commanded?

Per. Faſt bound in double chains, and at full length
He lies ſupine on earth; with as much eaſe
She might remove the centre of this earth,
As looſe the rivets of his bonds.

King. 'Tis well.

[*A mute appears, and ſeeing the king, retires.*
Ha! ſtop, and ſeize that mute; Alonzo, follow him.
Ent'ring he met my eyes, and ſtarted back,
Frighted, and fumbling one hand in his boſom,
As to conceal th' importance of his errand.

[Alonzo *follows him, and returns with a paper.*

Alon. A bloody proof of obſtinate fidelity!

King. What doſt thou mean?

Alon.

Alon. Soon as I ſeiz'd the man,
He ſnatch'd from out his boſom this—and ſtrove
With raſh and greedy haſte, at once, to cram
The morſel down his throat. I caught his arm,
And hardly wrench'd his hand to wring it from him;
Which done, he drew a poignard from his ſide,
And on the inſtant plung'd it in his breaſt.

King. Remove the body thence, ere Zara ſee it.

Alon. I'll be ſo bold to borrow his attire;
'Twill quit me of my promiſe to Gonſalez. [*Aſide. Exit.*

' *Per.* Whate'er it is, the king's complexion turns.'

King. How's this? My mortal foe beneath my roof!
[*Having read the letter.*
Oh, give me patience, all ye powers! No, rather
Give me new rage, implacable revenge,
And trebled fury——Ha! who's there?

Per. My lord. [pry

King. Hence, ſlave! how dar'ſt thou bide, to watch and
Into how poor a thing a king deſcends,
How like thyſelf, when paſſion treads him down?
Ha! ſtir not, on thy life; for thou wert fix'd,
And planted here, to ſee me gorge this bait,
And laſh againſt the hook—By Heav'n, you're all
Rank traitors; thou art with the reſt combin'd;
Thou knew'ſt that Oſmyn was Alphonſo; knew'ſt
My daughter privately with him conferr'd;
And wert the ſpy and pander to their meeting.

Per. By all that's holy, I'm amaz'd——

King. Thou ly'ſt.
Thou art accomplice too with Zara; here
Where ſhe ſets down—*Still will I ſet thee free*—[Reading.
That ſomewhere is repeated—*I have power*
O'er them that are thy guards—Mark that, thou traitor.

Per. It was your majeſty's command I ſhould
Obey her order.——

King. [Reading.]——*And ſtill will I ſet*
Thee free, Alphonſo——Hell! curs'd, curs'd Alphonſo!
Falſe and perfidious Zara! Strumpet daughter!
Away, begone, thou feeble boy, fond love;
All nature, ſoftneſs, pity and compaſſion,
This hour I throw ye off, and entertain
Fell hate within my breaſt, revenge and gall.

By Heav'n, I'll meet, and counterwork this treachery.
Hark thee, villain, traitor—answer me, slave.

Per. My service has not merited those titles.

King. Dar'st thou reply? 'Take that'—thy service! thine! '[*Strikes him.*'

What's thy whole life, thy soul, thy all, to my
One moment's ease? Hear my command; and look
That thou obey, or horror on thy head:
Drench me thy dagger in Alphonso's heart.
Why dost thou start? Resolve, or——

Per. Sir, I will.

King. 'Tis well—that when she comes to set him free,
His teeth may grin, and mock at her remorse.
[Perez *going.*
—Stay thee—I've farther thought—I'll add to this,
And give her eyes yet greater disappointment:
When thou hast ended him, bring me his robe;
And let the cell where she'll expect to see him
Be darken'd, so as to amuse the sight.
I'll be conducted thither——mark me well——
There with his turbant, and his robe array'd,
And laid along, as he now lies, supine,
I shall convict her, to her face, of falsehood.
When for Alphonso's she shall take my hand,
And breathe her sighs upon my lips for his;
Sudden I'll start and dash her with her guilt.
But see, she comes. I'll shun th' encounter; thou
Follow me, and give heed to my direction. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Zara *and* Selim.

Za. 'The mute not yet return'd!' ha! 'twas the king,
The king that parted hence! frowning he went;
'His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down
'Their red and angry beams; as if his sight
'Would, like the raging dog-star, scorch the earth,
'And kindle ruin in its course:' Dost think
He saw me?

Sel. Yes: but then, as if he thought
His eyes had err'd, he hastily recall'd
Th' imperfect look, and sternly turn'd away.

Za. Shun me when seen! I fear thou hast undone me.
'Thy shallow artifice begets suspicion,
'And, like a cobweb veil, but thinly shades

'The

'The face of thy design; alone disguising
'What should have ne'er been seen; imperfect mischief!
'Thou, like the adder, venomous and deaf,
'Hast stung the traveller, and after hear'st
'Not his pursuing voice; e'en when thou think'st
'To hide, the rustling leaves and bended grass
'Confess and point the path which thou hast crept.
'Oh, fate of fools! officious in contriving;
'In executing, puzzled, lame, and lost.'

Sel. Avert, it Heav'n, that you should ever suffer
For my defect; or that the means which I
Devis'd to serve, should ruin your design.
Prescience is Heav'n's alone, not giv'n to man.
If I have fail'd, in what, as being man,
I needs must fail; impute not as a crime
My nature's want, but punish nature in me;
I plead not for a pardon, and to live,
But to be punish'd and forgiven. Here, strike;
I bare my breast to meet your just revenge.

Za. I have not leisure now to take so poor
A forfeit as thy life; somewhat of high
And more important fate requires my thought.
'When I've concluded on myself, if I
'Think fit, I'll leave thee my command to die.'
Regard me well; and dare not to reply
To what I give in charge; for I'm resolv'd.
Give order that the two remaining mutes
Attend me instantly, with each a bowl
Of such ingredients mix'd, as will with speed
Benumb the living faculties, and give
Most easy and inevitable death.
Yes, Osmyn, yes; be Osmyn or Alphonso,
I'll give thee freedom, if thou dar'st be free:
Such liberty as I embrace myself,
Thou shalt partake. Since fates no more afford;
I can but die with thee, to keep my word. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *opening, shews the prison.*

Enter Gosalez *disguised like a mute, with a dagger.*

Gon. Nor centinel, nor guard! the doors unbarr'd!
And all as still, as at the noon of night!
Sure death already has been busy here.

There

There lies my way; that door too is unlock'd. [*Looking in.*
Ha! sure he sleeps—all's dark within, save what
A lamp, that feebly lifts a sickly flame,
By fits reveals—his face seems turn'd, to favour
Th' attempt: I'll steal and do it unperceiv'd.
What noise! somebody coming? 'st, Alonzo?
Nobody. Sure he'll wait without——I would
'Twere done—I'll crawl, and sting him to the heart,
Then cast my skin, and leave it there to answer it. [*Goes in.*

Enter Garcia *and* Alonzo.

Gar. Where, where, Alonzo, where's my father? where
The king? Confusion! all is on the rout!
All's lost, all ruin'd by surprize and treachery.
Where, where is he! Why dost thou mislead me?

Alon. My lord, he enter'd but a moment since,
And could not pass me unperceiv'd—What hoa!
My lord, my lord! What hoa! my lord Gonsalez!

Enter Gonsalez *bloody.*

Gon. Perdition choak your clamours——whence this Garcia! [rudeness?

Gar. Perdition, slavery, and death,
Are ent'ring now our doors. Where is the king?
What means this blood; and why this face of horror?

Gon. No matter—give me first to know the cause
Of these your rash, and ill-tim'd exclamations.

Gar. The eastern gate is to the foe betray'd,
Who, but for heaps of slain that choak the passage,
Had enter'd long ere now, and borne down all
Before 'em, to the palace walls. Unless
The king in person animate our men,
Granada's lost; and to confirm this fear,
The traitor Perez, and the captive Moor,
Are through a postern fled, and join the foe.

Gon. Would all were false as that; for whom you call
The Moor is dead. That Osmyn was Alphonso;
In whose heart's blood this poignard yet is warm.

Gar. Impossible; for Osmyn was, while flying,
Pronounc'd aloud by Perez for Alphonso.

Gon. Enter that chamber, and convince your eyes,
How much report has wrong'd your easy faith.

[Garcia *goes in.*

Alon.

Alon. My lord, for certain truth Perez is fled;
And has declar'd, the cauſe of his revolt
Was to revenge a blow the king had giv'n him.
Gar. [*Returning.*] Ruin and horror! Oh, heart-wounding ſight!
Gon. What ſays my ſon? What ruin? Ha! what horror?
Gar. Blaſted my eyes, and ſpeechleſs be my tongue,
Rather than or to ſee, or to relate
This deed—Oh, dire miſtake! Oh, fatal blow!
The king———
Gon. Alon. The king!
Gar. Dead, welt'ring, drown'd in blood.
See, ſee, attir'd like Oſmyn, where he lies. [*They look in.*
Oh, whence, or how, or wherefore was this done?
But what imports the manner or the cauſe?
Nothing remains to do, or to require,
But that we all ſhould turn our ſwords againſt
Ourſelves, and expiate with our own, his blood.
Gon. Oh, wretch! Oh, curs'd and raſh deluded fool!
On me, on me turn your avenging ſwords.
I, who have ſpilt my royal maſter's blood,
Should make atonement by a death as horrid,
And fall beneath the hand of my own ſon.
Gar. Ha! what! atone this murder with a greater!
The horror of that thought has damp'd my rage.
'The earth already groans to bear this deed;
'Oppreſs her not, nor think to ſtain her face
'With more unnatural blood. Murder my father!
'Better with this to rip up my own bowels,
'And bathe it to the hilt, in far leſs damnable
'Self-murder.'
Gon. Oh, my ſon! from the blind dotage
Of a father's fondneſs theſe ills aroſe.
For thee I've been ambitious, baſe, and bloody:
For thee I've plung'd into this ſea of ſin;
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,
While t'other bore the crown (to wreathe thy brow)
Whoſe weight has ſunk me, ere I reach'd the ſhore.
Gar. Fatal ambition! Hark! the foe is enter'd: [*Shout.*
The ſhrillneſs of that ſhout ſpeaks them at hand.
'We have no time to ſearch into the cauſe
'Of this ſurpriſing and moſt fatal error.

'What's

'What's to be done? the king's death known, would
'The few remaining soldiers with despair, [strike
'And make them yield to mercy of the conqueror.'

Alon. My lord, I've thought how to conceal the body.
Require me not to tell the means, till done,
Lest you forbid what you may then approve.
[*Goes in. Shout.*

Gon. They shout again! Whate'er he means to do,
'Twere fit the soldiers were amus'd with hopes;
And in the mean time fed with expectation
To see the king in person at their head.

Gar. Were it a truth, I fear 'tis now too late.
But I'll omit no care, nor haste,; and try,
Or to repel their force, or bravely die. [*Exit* Garcia.

Re-enter Alonzo.

Gon. What hast thou done, Alonzo?

Alon. Such a deed,
As but an hour ago I'd not have done,
Though for the crown of universal empire.
But what are kings reduc'd to common clay?
Or who can wound the dead?—I've from the body
Sever'd the head, and in an obscure corner
Dispos'd it, muffled in the mute's attire,
Leaving to view of them who enter next,
Alone the undistinguishable trunk:
Which may be still mistaken by the guards
For Osmyn, if in seeking for the king,
They chance to find it.

Gon. 'Twas an act of horror;
And of a piece with this day's dire misdeeds.
But 'tis no time to ponder or repent.
Haste thee, Alonzo, haste thee hence with speed,
To aid my son. I'll follow with the last
Reserve, to reinforce his arms: at least,
I shall make good and shelter his retreat.
[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter Zara, *followed by* Selim, *and two mutes bearing the bowls.*

Za. Silence and solitude are every where.
Through all the gloomy ways and iron doors
That hither lead, nor human face nor voice
Is seen or heard. 'A dreadful din was wont

'To

' To grate the ſenſe, when enter'd here, from groans
' And howls of ſlaves condemn'd; from clink of chains,
' And craſh of ruſty bars and creeking hinges:
' And ever and anon the ſight was daſh'd
' With frightful faces, and the meagre looks
' Of grim and ghaſtly executioners.
' Yet more this ſtillneſs terrifies my ſoul,
' Than did that ſcene of complicated horrors.
' It may be that the cauſe of this my errand
' And purpoſe, being chang'd from life to death,
' Had alſo wrought this chilling change of temper.
' Or does my heart bode more? What can it more
' Than death?'
Let 'em ſet down the bowls, and warn Alphonſo
That I am here—ſo. You return and find
[*Mutes going in.*
The king; tell him, what he requir'd, I've done,
And wait his coming to approve the deed. [*Exit* Selim.

Enter Mutes.

Zara. What have you ſeen? Ha! wherefore ſtare you thus [*The mutes return and look affrighted.*
With haggard eyes? Why are your arms acroſs?
Your heavy and deſponding heads hung down?
Why is't you more than ſpeak in theſe ſad ſigns?
Give me more ample knowledge of this mourning.
[*They go to the ſcene, which opening, ſhe perceives the body.*
Ha! proſtrate! bloody! headleſs! Oh———I'm loſt.
Oh, Oſmyn! Oh, Alphonſo! Cruel fate!
Cruel, cruel, Oh, more than killing object!
I came prepar'd to die, and ſee thee die—
Nay, came prepar'd myſelf to give thee death—
But cannot bear to find thee thus, my Oſmyn———
Oh, this accurs'd, this baſe, this treach'rous king!

Enter Selim.

Selim. I've fought in vain, for no where can the king
Be found———
Zar. Get thee to hell, and ſeek him there. [*Stabs him.*
His helliſh rage had wanted means to act,
But for thy fatal and pernicious counſel.
Sel. You thought it better then——but I'm rewarded.
The mute you ſent, by ſome miſchance was ſeen,

And

And forc'd to yield your letter with his life;
I found the dead and bloody body ſtripp'd———
My tongue faulters, and my voice fails——I ſink——
Drink not the poiſon—for Alphonſo is——— [*Dies.*

Zar. As thou art now—and I ſhall quickly be.
'Tis not that he is dead: for 'twas decreed
We both ſhould die. Nor is't that I ſurvive;
I have a certain remedy for that.
But, Oh, he dy'd unknowing in my heart.
He knew I lov'd, but knew not to what height:
Nor that I meant to fall before his eyes,
A martyr and a victim to my vows.
Inſenſible of this laſt proof he's gone;
'Yet fate alone can rob his morral part
'Of ſenſe; his ſoul ſtill ſees and knows each purpoſe,
'And fix'd event, of my perſiſting faith.'
Then wherefore do I pauſe? Give me the bowl.
[*A mute kneels and gives one of the bowls.*
Hover a moment, yet, thou gentle ſpirit,
Soul of my love, and I will wait thy flight.
This to our mutual bliſs, when join'd above. [*Drinks.*
Oh, friendly draught, already in my heart.
Cold, cold; my veins are icicles and froſt.
I'll creep into his boſom, lay me there;
Cover us cloſe—or I ſhall chill his breaſt,
And fright him from my arms—See, ſee, he ſlides
Still farther from me; look, he hides his face,
I cannot feel it—quite beyond my reach,—
Oh, now he's gone, and all is dark—— [*Dies.*

[*The mutes kneel and mourn over her.*

Enter Almeria *and* Leonora.

Alm. Oh, let me ſeek him in this horrid cell;
For in the tomb, or priſon, I alone
Muſt hope to find him.

Leon. Heavens! what diſmal ſcene
Of death is this? The eunuch Selim ſlain!

Alm. Shew me, for I am come in ſearch of death;
But want a guide; for tears have dimm'd my ſight.

Leon. Alas, a little farther, and behold
Zara all pale and dead! two frightful men,
Who ſeem the murderers, kneel weeping by;
Feeling remorſe too late for what they've done.

But, Oh, forbear—lift up your eyes no more;
But haſte away, fly from this fatal place,
Where miſeries are multiply'd; return,
Return, and look not on; for there's a dagger
Ready to ſtab the ſight, and make your eyes
Rain blood——

Alm. Oh, I foreknow, foreſee that object.
Is it at laſt then ſo? Is he then dead?
'What, dead at laſt? quite, quite, for every dead?
'There, there, I ſee him; there he lies, the blood
'Yet bubbling from his wounds—Oh, more than ſavage!
'Had they or hearts or eyes that did this deed?
'Could eyes endure to guide ſuch cruel hands?
'Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,
'That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to ſtone?
——I do not weep! The ſprings of tears are dry'd;
And of a ſudden I am calm, as if
All things were well; and yet my huſband's murder'd!
Yes, yes, I know to mourn! I'll ſluice this heart,
The ſource of woe, and let the torrent looſe.
——Thoſe men have left to weep! they look on me!
I hope they murder all on whom they look.
Behold me well; your bloody hands have err'd,
And wrongfully have ſlain thoſe innocents:
I am the ſacrifice deſign'd to bleed,
And come prepar'd to yield my throat——They ſhake
Their heads in ſign of grief and innocence!
[*They point at the bowl on the ground.*
And point! What mean they? Ha! a cup; Oh, well,
I underſtand what med'cine has been here.
Oh, noble thirſt! yet greedy to drink all——
——Oh, for another draught of death——'What mean
they? [*They point at the other cup.*
'Ha! point again!' 'tis there, and full, I hope.
Thanks to the lib'ral hand that fill'd thee thus,
I'll drink my glad acknowledgment——

Leon. Oh, hold
For mercy's ſake, upon my knee I beg——

Alm. With thee the kneeling world ſhould beg in vain.
Seeſt thou not there? Behold who proſtrate lies,
And pleads againſt thee; who ſhall then prevail?
Yet I will take a cold and parting leave
From his pale lips; I'll kiſs him ere I drink,

Leſt the rank juice ſhould bliſter on my mouth,
And ſtain the colour of my laſt adieu.
Horror! a headleſs trunk! nor lips nor face,
[*Coming near the body, ſtarts and lets fall the cup.*
But ſpouting veins, and mangled fleſh! Oh, Oh!
Enter Alphonſo, Heli, Perez, *with* Garcia *priſoner.*
Guards and attendants.

Alph. Away, ſtand off, where is ſhe? let me fly,
Save her from death, and ſnatch her to my heart.

Alm. Oh!

Alph. Forbear; my arms alone ſhall hold her up,
Warm her to life, and wake her into gladneſs.
'Oh, let me talk to thy reviving ſenſe
'The words of joy and peace; warm thy cold beauties
'With the new flushing ardour of my cheek;
'Into thy lips pour the ſoft trickling balm
'Of cordial ſighs; and reinſpire thy boſom
'With the breath of love. Shine, awake, Almeria,'
Give a new birth to thy long-ſhaded eyes,
Then double on the day reflected light.

Alm. Where am I? Heav'n! what does this dream intend?

Alph. Oh, may'ſt thou never dream of leſs delight,
Nor ever wake to leſs ſubſtantial joys.

Alm. Giv'n me again from death! Oh, all ye pow'rs,
Confirm this miracle! Can I believe
My ſight 'againſt my ſight? and ſhall I truſt
'That ſenſe, which in one inſtant ſhews him dead
'And living?'—Yes, I will; I've been abus'd
With apparitions and affrighting phantoms:
This is my lord, my life, my only huſband,
I have him now, and we no more will part.
My father too ſhall have compaſſion——

Alph. Oh, my heart's comfort; 'tis not giv'n to this
Frail life, to be intirely bleſs'd. E'en now,
In this extremeſt joy my ſoul can taſte,
Yet I am daſh'd to think that thou muſt weep;
Thy father fell where he deſign'd my death.
Gonſalez and Alonzo, both of wounds
Expiring, have, with their laſt breath, confeſs'd
The juſt decrees of Heav'n, which on themſelves
Has turn'd their own moſt bloody purpoſes.

Nay, I must grant, 'tis fit you should be thus——

[*She weeps.*

'Let 'em remove the body from her sight.'
Ill-fated Zara! Ha! a cup! Alas!
Thy error then is plain! but I were flint
Not to o'erflow in tribute to thy memory.
Oh, Garcia!——
Whose virtue has renounc'd thy father's crimes,
Seest thou, how just the hand of Heav'n has been?
Let us, who through our innocence survive,
Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair;
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds;
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by ALMERIA.

THE tragedy thus done, I am, you know,
No more a princeſs, but in ſtatu quo;
And now as unconcern'd this mourning wear,
As if indeed a widow, or an heir.
I've leiſure, now, to mark your ſev'ral faces,
And know each critic by his ſour grimaces.
To poiſon plays, I ſee them where they ſit,
Scatter'd, like ratſbane, up and down the pit;
While others watch, like pariſh-ſearchers hir'd,
To tell of what diſeaſe the play expir'd.
Oh, with what joy they run to ſpread the new
Of a damn'd poet, and departed muſe!
But if he 'ſcape, with what regret they're ſeiz'd!
And how they're diſappointed, when they're pleas'd!
Critics to plays for the ſame end reſort,
That ſurgeons wait on trials in a court:
For innocence condemn'd they've no reſpect,
Provided they've a body to diſſect.
As Suſſex men, that dwell upon the ſhore,
Look out when ſtorms ariſe, and billows roar,
Devoutly praying, with uplifted hands,
That ſome well-laden ſhip may ſtrike the ſands,
To whoſe rich cargo they may make pretence,
And fatten on the ſpoils of Providence:
So critics throng to ſee a new play ſplit,
And thrive and proſper on the wrecks of wit.
Small hope our poet from theſe proſpects draws;
And therefore to the fair commends his cauſe.
Your tender hearts to mercy are inclin'd,
With whom, he hopes, this play will favour find,
Which was an off'ring to the ſex deſign'd.

BELL'S EDITION.

THE *DOUBLE DEALER.*

A COMEDY,

As written by CONGREVE.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

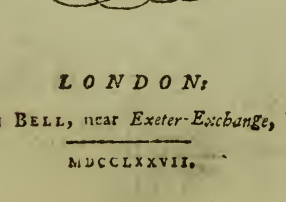
AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book.

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS.

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



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MDCCLXXVII.

To the Right Honourable

CHARLES MONTAGUE,

ONE OF THE

LORDS OF THE TREASURY.

SIR,

I Heartily wish this play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your acceptance; and that my Dedication of it to you might be more becoming that honour and esteem which I, with every body who is so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your countenance when yet unknown; and now it is made public, it wants your protection.

I would not have any body imagine, that I think this play without its faults, for I am conscious of several. I confess I designed (whatever vanity or ambition occasioned that design) to have written a true and regular comedy; but I found it an undertaking which put me in mind of——*Sudet multum, frustraque laboret ausus idem*. And now to make amends for the vanity of such a design, I do confess both the attempt, and the imperfect performance. Yet I must take the boldness to say, I have not miscarried in the whole; for the mechanical part of it is regular. That I may say with a little vanity, as a builder may say, he has built a house according to the model laid down before him; or a gardener that he has set his flowers in a knot of such or such a figure. I designed the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrowed one hint of it any where. I made the plot as strong as I could, because it was single; and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three unities of the Drama. Sir, this discourse is very impertinent to you, whose judgment much better can discern the faults, than I can excuse them; and whose good-nature, like that of a lover, will find

out thoſe hidden beauties (if there are any ſuch) which it would be great immodeſty for me to diſcover. I think I do not ſpeak improperly when I call you a *Lover* of Poetry; for it is very well known ſhe has been a very kind miſtreſs to you; ſhe has not denied you the laſt favour, and ſhe has been fruitful to you in a moſt beautiful iſſue—If I break off abruptly here, I hope every body will underſtand that it is to avoid a commendation, which, as it is your due, would be moſt eaſy for me to pay, and too troubleſome for you to receive.

I have, ſince the acting of this play, hearkened after the objections which have been made to it; for I was conſcious where a true critic might have put me upon my defence, I was prepared for the attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated ſome parts, and excuſed others; and where there were any plain miſcarriages, I would moſt ingenuouſly have confeſſed them. But I have not heard any thing ſaid ſufficient to provoke an anſwer. That which looks moſt like an objection, does not relate in particular to this play, but to all or moſt that ever have been written; and that is ſoliloquy. Therefore I will anſwer it, not only for my own ſake, but to ſave others the trouble, to whom it may hereafter be objected.

I grant, that for a man to talk to himſelf, appears abſurd and unnatural; and indeed it is ſo in moſt caſes: but the circumſtances which may attend the occaſion make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a man, to have deſigns which require him to himſelf, and in their nature cannot admit of a confident. Such, for certain, is all villainy; and other leſs miſchievous intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a ſecond perſon. In ſuch a caſe, therefore, the audience muſt obſerve whether the perſon upon the ſtage takes any notice of them at all, or no. For if he ſuppoſes any one to be by, when he talks to himſelf, it is monſtrous and ridiculous to the laſt degree; nay, not only in this caſe, but in any part of a play, if there is expreſſed any knowledge of an audience, it is inſufferable. But otherwiſe, when a man in ſoliloquy reaſons with himſelf, and *pro*'s and *con*'s, and weighs all his deſigns, we ought not to imagine that this man either talks to us, or to himſelf; he is only thinking, and thinking ſuch matter as were

in-

inexcusable folly in him to speak. But because we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of this contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no better way being yet invented for the communication of thought.

Another very wrong objection has been made by some who have not taken leisure to distinguish the characters. The hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him, (meaning Mellefont) is a gull, and made a fool, and cheated. Is every man a gull and a fool that is deceived? At that rate I am afraid the two classes of men will be reduced to one, and the knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their title; but if an open-hearted honest man, who has an entire confidence in one whom he takes to be his friend, and whom he has obliged to be so; and who (to confirm him in his opinion) in all appearance, and upon several trials, has been so; if this man be deceived by the treachery of the other, must he of necessity commence fool immediately, only because the other has proved a villain? Ay, but there was a caution given to Mellefont, in the first act, by his friend Careless. Of what nature was that caution? only to give the audience some light into the character of Maskwell before his appearance, and not to convince Mellefont of his treachery; for that was more than Careless was then able to do: he never knew Maskwell guilty of any villainy; he was only a sort of man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his familarity with my Lady Touchwood, let them examine the answer that Mellefont makes him, and compare it with the conduct of Maskwell's character through the play.

I would beg them again to look into the character of Maskwell before they accuse Mellefont of weakness for being deceived by him. For upon summing up the enquiry into this objection, it may be found they have mistaken cunning in one character for folly in another.

But there is one thing, at which I am more concerned than all the false criticisms that are made upon me; and that is, some of the ladies are offended. I am heartily sorry for it; for I declare I would rather disoblige all the critics in the world, than one of the fair-sex. They

are concerned that I have repreſented ſome women vicious and affected: How can I help it? It is the buſineſs of a comic poet to paint the vices and follies of human-kind; and there are but two ſexes, male and female, *men* and *women*, which have a title to humanity: and if I leave one half of them out, the work will be imperfect. I ſhould be very glad of an opportunity to make my compliment to thoſe ladies who are offended; but they can no more expect it in a comedy, than to be tickled by a ſurgeon when he is letting them blood. They who are virtuous or diſcreet ſhould not be offended; for ſuch characters as theſe diſtinguiſh *them*, and make their beauties more ſhining and obſerved: and they who are of the other kind, may nevertheleſs paſs for ſuch, by ſeeming not to be diſpleaſed, or touched with the ſatire of this *Comedy*. Thus have they alſo wrongfully accuſed me of doing them a prejudice, when I have in reality done them a ſervice.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the freedom I take of making anſwers to other people, in an epiſtle which ought wholly to be ſacred to you: but ſince I intend the play to be ſo too, I hope I may take the more liberty of juſtifying it where it is in the right.

I muſt now, Sir, declare to the world how kind you have been to my endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excuſed what was ill performed. I beg you would continue the ſame method in your acceptance of this dedication. I know no other way of making a return to that humanity you ſhewed, in protecting an infant, but by enrolling it in your ſervice, now that it is of age, and come into the world. Therefore, be pleaſed to accept of this as an acknowledgment of the favour you have ſhewn me, and an earneſt of the real ſervice and gratitude of,

SIR,

Your moſt obliged,

Humble Servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

To my dear Friend Mr. CONGREVE, on his Comedy, *called, The* DOUBLE DEALER.

WELL then; the promis'd hour is come at last;
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires, and as they fought they writ,
Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit;
Theirs was the giant race, before the flood;
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.
Like Janus, he the stubborn soil manur'd,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd:
Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude,
And boist'rous English wit with art indu'd.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were, with want of genius, curst;
The second temple was not like the first:
'Till you the best Vitruvius come at length,
Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base;
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space;
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise:
He mov'd the mind, but had no pow'r to raise.
Great Johnson did by strength of judgment please:
Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In diff'rent talents both adorn'd their age;
One for the study, t'other for the stage.
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One match'd in judgment, both o'er-match'd in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see,
Etherege's courtship, Southerne's purity;
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley.
All this in blooming youth you have achiev'd;
Nor are your foil'd cotemporaries griev'd;
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you, because we love.
Fabius might joy with Scipio, when he saw
A beardless Consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome;
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.

Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame,
And ſcholar to the youth he taught, became.
Oh, that your brows my laurel had ſuſtain'd,
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!
The father had deſcended for the ſon;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus when the State one Edward did depoſe,
A greater Edward in his room aroſe.
But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd,
For Tom the ſecond reigns, like Tom the firſt.
But let them not miſtake my patron's part,
Nor call his charity their own deſert.
Yet this I propheſy; thou ſhalt be ſeen
(Tho' with ſome ſhort parentheſis between)
High on the throne of Wit; and ſeated there,
Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.
Thy firſt attempt an early promiſe made,
That early promiſe this has more than paid,
So bold, yet ſo judiciouſly you dare,
That your leaſt praiſe, is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,
But genius muſt be born, and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native ſtore;
Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakeſpeare gave as much; ſhe could not give him more.
Maintain your poſt; that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impoſſible you ſhould proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age,
And juſt abandoning th' ungrateful ſtage;
Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expence,
I live a rent-charge on his providence:
But you, whom ev'ry muſe and grace adorn,
Whom I foreſee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and Oh, defend,
Againſt your judgment, your departed friend!
Let not th' inſulting foe my fame purſue;
But ſhade thoſe laurels which deſcend to you:
And take for tribute what theſe lines expreſs:
You merit more; nor could my love do leſs.

JOHN DRYDEN.

PRO-

PROLOGUE.

MOORS have this way (as story tells) to know
Whether their brats are truly got, or no;
Into the sea the new-born babe is thrown,
There, as instinct directs, to swim or drown.
A barbarous device, to try if spouse
Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.
Such are the trials poets make of plays;
Only they trust to more inconstant seas;
So does our author, this his child commit
To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,
To know if it be truly born of Wit.
Critics, avaunt; for you are fish of prey,
And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play.
Be ev'ry monster of the deep away;
Let's have fair trial, and a clear sea.
Let Nature work, and do not damn too soon,
For life will struggle long, ere it sink down:
And will at least rise thrice before it drown.
Let us consider, had it been our fate,
Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!
I will not say we'd all in danger been,
Were each to suffer for his mother's sin:
But by my troth I cannot avoid thinking,
How nearly some good men might have 'scap'd sinking.
But, Heaven be prais'd, this custom is confin'd
Alone to th' offspring of the muses kind:
Our Christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;
I know not one Moor-husband in the city.
I'th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,
For he thinks all his own that is his wives.
Whatever fate is for this play design'd,
The poet's sure he shall some comfort find:
For if his muse has play'd him false, the worst
That can befal him, is, to be divorced;
You husbands judge, if that be to be curs'd.

DRA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

	Covent-Garden.
Maskwell, a villain; pretended friend to *Mellefont*, gallant to Lady *Touchwood*, and in love with *Cynthia*	Mr. Sheridan.
Lord *Touchwood*, uncle to *Mellefont*	Mr. Clarke.
Mellefont, promised to, and in love with *Cynthia*	Mr. Wroughton.
Careless, his friend	Mr. Lewis.
Lord *Froth*, a solemn coxcomb	Mr. Booth.
Brisk	Mr. Woodward.
Sir *Paul Plyant*, an uxorious, foolish, old Knight; brother to Lady *Touchwood*, and father to *Cynthia*	Mr. Macklin.

WOMEN.

Lady *Touchwood*, in love with *Mellefont*	Mrs. Jackson.
Cynthia, daughter to Sir *Paul* by a former wife, promised to *Mellefont*	Miss Dayes.
Lady *Froth*, a great coquet; pretender to poetry, wit, and learning	Mrs. Mattocks.
Lady *Plyant*, insolent to her husband, and easy to any pretender	Miss Macklin.

Chaplain, *Boy*, *Footmen*, and *Attendants*.

The SCENE, *a Gallery in Lord* Touchwood's *House, with Chambers adjoining.*

THE

THE DOUBLE DEALER.

*** *The lines distinguished by inverted comas,* ‘ *thus,*’ *are omitted in the representation.*

ACT I.

SCENE. *A Gallery in Lord* Touchwood's *House, with Chambers adjoining.*

Enter Careless, *crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves, and sword in his hands, as just risen from table*; Mellefont *following him.*

MELLEFONT.

NED, Ned, whither so fast! What, turn'd flincher! Why, you wo'not leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I'm weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

Care. No, faith, but your fools grow noisy; and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retired to their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom after dinner.———But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

Care. And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

Enter

Enter Brisk.

Brisk. Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What, do you give ground? Mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you are always spoiling company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling company by coming into it.

Brisk. Pooh, ha, ha, ha, I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the gods! and burning envy.——I'll be judged by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery better, you or I. Pshaw, man, when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha! Mellefont.

Mel. O' my word, Brisk, that was a home thrust——you have silenced him.

Brisk. Oh, my dear Mellefont, let me perish if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine——The deuce take me, if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society——He, I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: 'Egad, I could not have said it out of thy company—Careless, ha!

Care. Hum, what is it?

Brisk. O, *mon cœur!* What is't! Nay, gad I'll punish you for want of apprehension:—the deuce take me if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no taste—But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

Care. Pr'ythee, get thee gone: thou seest we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately if you'll but go in, and keep up good humour and sense in the company: Pr'ythee do——they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. 'Egad so they will——Well I will, I will; gad you shall command me from the zenith to the nadir.——But the deuce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come.—But pr'ythee, dear rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste, I shall burst else.—And yonder your uncle, my Lord Touchwood, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my Lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow;

row; nor the deuce take me, I won't write your epithalamium ——and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

Mel. Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

Brisk. Enough, enough. Careless, bring your apprehension along with you. [*Exit.*

Care. Pert coxcomb.

Mel. Faith, 'tis a good-natured coxcomb, and has very entertaining follies——You must be more humane to him; at this juncture it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; tho' patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise. There are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none today; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou mayst seem a fool.

Care. Why, how now, why this extravagant proposition?

Mel. O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertinence keep my Lady Touchwood's head from working: for Hell is not more busy than her brain, nor contains more devils than that imaginations.

Care. I thought your fear of her had been over—— Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia, and her father Sir Paul Plyant come to settle the writings this day, on purpose?

Mel. True; but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be alarmed. None besides you and Maskwell are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me. Since my first refusal of her addresses, she has endeavoured to do me all ill offices with my uncle; yet has managed them with that subtilty, that to him they have borne the face of kindness, while her malice, like a dark lanthorn, only shone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure, than to avoid the importunities of her love; and of two evils, I thought myself favoured in her aversion: but whether urged by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw, to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my mar-

riage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surprized me in my bed. ——

Care. Was there ever such a fury! 'Tis well Nature has not put it into her sex's power to ravish.—Well, bless us! proceed. What followed?

Mel. What at first amazed me; for I looked to have seen her in all the transports of a slighted and revengeful woman: but when I expected thunder from her voice, and lightning in her eyes, I saw her melted into tears, and hushed into a sigh. It was long before either of us spoke, passion had tied her tongue, and amazement mine. —In short, the consequence was thus: she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I feared at first; for starting from my bed-side like a fury, she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief: having disarmed her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirmed by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes, 'till they had seen my ruin.

Care. Exquisite woman! But what the devil does she think thou hast no more sense than to get an heir upon her body to disinherit thyself: for, as I take it, this settlement upon you, is with a proviso that your uncle have no children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the service you are to do me will be a pleasure to yourself; I must get you to engage my Lady Plyant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest. And if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She is handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense, and has an old fond husband.

Care. I confess a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

Mel. For my Lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's galantry, as they call it. I'll observe my uncle myself; and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for Sir Paul, my wife father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would

would scarce make her a moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have manned your works; but I wish you may not have the weakest guard where the enemy is strongest.

Mel. Maskwell, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith, I cannot help it; you know I never liked him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt, you mean.

Mel. My aunt!

Care. I am mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them you do not suspect, notwithstanding her passion for you.

Mel. Pooh, pooh, nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken: but your aunt's aversion in her revenge cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest, that you have transplanted; and should it take root in my lady, I do not see what you can expect from the fruit.

Mel. I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up, let us meet them.

Enter Lord Touchwood, *Lord* Froth, *Sir* Paul Plyant, *and* Brisk.

Ld. T. Out upon't, nephew——leave your father-in-law, and me, to maintain our ground against young people.

Mel. I beg your Lordship's pardon—we were just returning.——

Sir P. Were you, son? Gadsbud, much better as it is—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy——t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me—as sure as

can be it would.—We wanted your company, but Mr. Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow he's a most facetious person—and the best company.—— And my Lord Froth, your Lordship is so merry a man, he, he, he.

Ld. F. O foy, Sir Paul, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you called me fool.

Sir P. Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. Brisk jokes, your Lordship's laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

Ld. F. Ridiculous! Sir Paul, you're strangely mistaken; I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, Sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jest but my own, or a lady's; I assure you, Sir Paul.

Brisk. How! how, my Lord! What, affront my wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laughed at?

Ld. F. O foy, don't misapprehend me; I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one. Ridiculous! to be pleased with what pleases the croud! Now, when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Brisk. I suppose that's because you laugh at your own jests, 'egad, ha, ha, ha.

Ld. F. He, he, I swear tho', your raillery provokes me to a smile.

Brisk. Ay, my Lord, it's a sign I hit you in the teeth, if you shew 'em.

Ld. F. He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

'*Care.* I find a quibble bears more sway in your Lord-'ship's face than a jest.'

Ld. F. Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea to settle our heads.

Sir P. With all my heart.—Mr. Brisk, you'll come to us—— or call me when you joke—I'll be ready to laugh incontinently. [*Exeunt Ld.* Touch. *and Sir* Paul.

Mel. But does your Lordship never see comedies?

Ld. F. O yes, sometimes, but I never laugh.

Mel.

Mel. No?

Ld. F. Oh, no—never laugh indeed, Sir.

Care. No! Why, what d'ye go there for?

Ld. F. To diſtinguiſh myſelf from the commonalty, and mortify the poets;—the fellows grow ſo conceited when any of their fooliſh wit prevails upon the ſide-boxes.—I ſwear——he, he, he, I have often conſtrained my inclinations to laugh——he, he, he, to avoid giving them encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to yourſelf, my Lord, as well as malicious to them.

Ld. F. I confeſs I did myſelf ſome violence at firſt, but now I think I have conquered it.

Brisk. Let me periſh, my Lord, but there is ſomething very particular in the humour; 'tis true, it makes againſt wit, and I'm ſorry for ſome friends of mine that write, but 'egad, I love to be malicious.—Nay, deuce take me, there's wit in't too——and wit muſt be foiled by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond, no other way, 'egad.

Ld. F. Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

Care. Wit! In what? Where the Devil's the wit in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

Brisk. O lord, why, can't you find it out?——Why, there 'tis, in the not laughing——Don't you apprehend me?——My Lord, Careleſs is a very honeſt fellow, but hark ye—you underſtand me, ſomewhat heavy, a little ſhallow, or ſo.—Why, I'll tell you now, ſuppoſe now you come up to me——Nay, pr'ythee Careleſs be inſtructed. Suppoſe, as I was ſaying, you come up to me holding your ſides, and laughing, as if you would——Well!—I look grave, and aſk the cauſe of this immoderate mirth—You laugh on ſtill, and are not able to tell me——Still I look grave, not ſo much as ſmile.——

Care. Smile, no, what the Devil ſhould you ſmile at, when you ſuppoſe I can't tell you?

Brisk. Pſhaw, pſhaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you ſhall tell me—at laſt—But it ſhall be a great while firſt.

Care. Well; but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, becauſe I long to have it over.

Brisk. Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die——and I hear it, and look thus.——Would not you be disappointed?

Care. No: for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

Ld. F. O foy, Mr. Careless, all the world allows Mr. Brisk to have wit; my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

Brisk. Pooh, my Lord, his voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you?

Care. Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, Brisk, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the deuce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the ladies, my Lord?

Ld. F. With all my heart;——methinks we are a solitude without them.

Mel. Or, what say you to another bottle of Champagne?

Ld. F. O, for the universe, not a drop more, I beseech you. Oh, intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already. [*Takes out a pocket glass, and looks in it.*

Brisk. Let me see, let me see, my Lord, I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encouraged a pimple here too.

[*Takes the glass, and looks.*

Ld. F. Then you must mortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, gentlemen, *allons*, here is company coming. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lady Touchwood *and* Maskwell.

L. T. I'll hear no more——Y'are false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail I confess, Madam, for your Ladyship's service.

L. T. That I should trust a man whom I had known betray his friend!

Mask. What friend have I betrayed; Or to whom?

L. T. Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me——Can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

L. T. Have you not wronged my Lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wronged him in the higheſt manner, in his bed?

Mask. With your Ladyſhip's help, and for your ſervice, as I told you before. I cannot deny that neither. Any thing more, Madam?

L. T. More! audacious villain. Oh, what's more is moſt my ſhame——Have you not diſhonoured me?

Mask. No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: ſo that accuſation's anſwered.——On to the next.

L. T. Death, do you dally with my paſſion? Inſolent devil! But have a care——provoke me not; for, by the eternal fire, you ſhall not eſcape my vengeance.—Calm villain! how unconcerned he ſtands, confeſſing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black! ——Oh, I have excuſes, thouſands, for my faults; fire in my temper, paſſions in my ſoul, apt to every provocation; oppreſſed at once with love and with deſpair: but a ſedate, a thinking villain, whoſe black blood runs temperately bad, what excuſe can clear?

Mask. Will you be in temper, Madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about diſordered.*] a very great rogue for your ſake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue ſtill, to do you ſervice; and you are flinging conſcience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myſelf? You know I am your creature, my life and fortune in your power; to diſoblige you brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myſelf: I do not pretend to honeſty, becauſe you know I am a raſcal: but I would convince you from the neceſſity of my being firm to you.

L. T. Neceſſity, impudence! Can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? 'Have not my 'fortune and my perſon been ſubjected to your plea-'ſure?' Were you not in the nature of a ſervant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my Lord? Where is that humble love, the languiſhing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlaſtingly engaged?

Mask.

Mask. Fixed, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove them, yet you———

L. T. Yet, what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have had a generous and a faithful passion, which you had never favoured but thro' revenge and policy.

L. T. Ha!

Mask. Look you, Madam, we are alone,—Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you loved your nephew when I first sighed for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I loved: for with that art you veiled your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold, I confess it; for by it I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you added to my hopes; I watched the occasion, and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplished my design; I prest the yielding minute, and was blest. How I have loved you since, words have not shewn, then how should words express?

L. T. Well, mollifying devil!——And have I not met your love with forward fire?

Mask. Your zeal I grant was ardent, but misplaced; there was revenge in view; that woman's idol had defiled the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.——A son and heir would have edged young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

L. T. Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my stilled soul for your diversion? Confusion!

Mask. Nay, Madam, I am gone, if you relapse——What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia? which, ere to-morrow, shall be done———had you but patience.

L. T. How, what said you, Maskwell,——Another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask.

Mask. By Heav'n, no; I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures; and will not rest 'till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

L. T. Oh, Maskwell, in vain do I disguise me from thee, thou knowest me, knowest the very inmost windings 'and recesses' of my soul.——'Oh, Mellefont! I 'burn:' married to-morrow! Despair strikes me! Yet my soul knows I hate him too: let him but once be mine, 'and next immediate ruin seize him.'

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too—Will that please you?

L. T. How, how? thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my Lady Plyant.

L. T. I have; she is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

L. T. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

Mask. I know it—I don't depend upon it.——But it will prepare something else; and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot.——If I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

One minute gives invention to destroy,
What to rebuild, will a whole age employ.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

Enter Lady Froth *and* Cynthia.

Cynthia.

INDEED, Madam! Is it possible your Ladyship could have been so much in love?

L. F. I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cynt.

Cyn. Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your Ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

L. F. O my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend—but really, as you say, I wonder too—but then I had a way. For between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

Cyn. How, pray Madam?

L. F. O, I writ, writ abundantly———Do you never write?

Cyn. Write, what?

L. F Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cyn. O lord, not I, Madam; I am content to be a courteous reader.

L. F. O inconsistent! in love, and not write! If my Lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together———O bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my Lord and I should never have met!

Cyn. Then neither my Lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

L. F. O' my conscience no more we should; thou say'st right——for sure my Lord Froth is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality! Ah! nothing at all of the common air——I think I may say he wants nothing but a blue ribband and a star, to make him shine the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? If you don't, I'll explain them to you.

Cyn. Yes, yes, Madam, I am not so ignorant.——At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions [*Aside.*

L. F. Nay, I beg your pardon; but being derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escaped the etymology.——But I am the more amazed, to find you a woman of letters, and not write! Bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

Cyn. Why faith, Madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

L. F. I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

Cyn

Cyn. A manner! What's that, Madam?

L. F. Some distinguishing quality, as for example, the *bel air* or *brillant* of Mr. Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *je ne sçai quoi*; he is too much a mediocrity in my mind.

Cyn. He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality, for which I like him ——— Here he comes.

Enter Lord Froth, Mellefont, *and* Brisk.

Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. [*Aside.*

L. F. My Lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; Ah! it makes my heart leap, I vow I sigh when I think on't:—My dear Lord! ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my Lord?

[*Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.*

Ld. F. Pleasant creature! Perfectly well, Ah! that look! Ay, there it is; who could resist!——'Twas so my heart was made a captive at first, and ever since it has been in love with happy slavery.

L. F. O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression, and then your bow! Good, my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture; here, suppose this my picture—[*Gives him a pocket glass.*] Pray mind, my Lord; ah! he bows charmingly. Nay, my Lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

[*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.*

Ld. F. I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

L. F. Ah! gallantry to the last degree—Mr. Brisk, you are a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my Lord?

Brisk. Never any thing but your Ladyship, let me perish.

L. F. O prettily turned again; let me die but you have a great deal of wit.——Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr. Brisk has a world of wit?

Mel. O yes, Madam.

Brisk. O dear, Madam———

L. F. An infinite deal!

Brisk.

Brisk. Oh Heavens, Madam———

L. F. More wit than any body,

Brisk. I am everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me, Madam.

Ld. F. Don't you think us a happy couple?

Cyn. I vow, my Lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world; 'for you are not only happy in 'another and when you are together, but happy in 'yourselves, and by yourselves.'

Ld. F. I hope Mellefont will make a good husband too.

Cyn. 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my Lord.

Ld. F. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I am afraid not.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

Ld. F. Heav'ns! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cyn. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

Ld. F. O your humble servant for that, dear Madam. Well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

Mel. Ay, my Lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your Lordship has; I shall think myself happy.

Ld. F. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. [*To Lady* Froth.] Your Ladyship is in the right; but 'egad I'm wholly turned into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do——keen Iambics, 'egad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

L. F. Did my Lord tell you? Yes, I vow, and the subject is my Lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess——*The Sillabub*, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Because my Lord's title's Froth, 'egad; ha, ha, ha, deuce take me, very *à propos*, and surprizing, ha, ha, ha.

L. F. He, ay, is not it?——And then I call my Lord Spumoso; and myself, what do ye think I call myself?

Brisk. Lactilla, may be——'Egad I cannot tell.

L. F. Biddy, that's all; just my own name.

Brisk.

Brisk. Biddy! 'Egad very pretty——Deuce take me if your Ladyship has not the art of surprizing the most naturally in the world——I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

L. F. O, you must be my confident, I must ask your advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble servant, let me perish——I presume your Ladyship has read Bossu?

L. F. O yes, and Rapine, and Dacier upon Aristotle and Horace.——My Lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. Brisk.

Ld. F. No, no, I'll allow Mr. Brisk; have you nothing about you to shew him, my dear?

L. F. Yes, I believe I have.——Mr. Brisk, come will you go into the next room, and there I'll shew you what I have. [*Exeunt L.* Froth *and* Brisk.

Ld. F. I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you. [*Exit Ld.* Froth.

Mel. You are thoughtful, Cynthia.

Cyn. I am thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are opposed.

Cyn. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we are going to play at; what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang it, that's not endeavouring to win, because it is possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up trump now.

Cyn. Then I find it is like cards, if either of us have a good hand it is an accident of fortune.

Mel. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls: fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.——'What's 'here, the music!——Oh, my Lord has promised the

'company a new song, we'll get them to give it us by 'the way. [*Musicians crossing the stage.*] Pray let us have 'the favour of you, to practise the song before the com-'pany hear it.

SONG.

'Cynthia frowns whene'er I woo her,
'Yet she's vex'd if I give over;
'Much she fears I should undo her,
'But much more to lose her lover:
'Thus, in doubting, she refuses;
'And not winning, thus she loses.

'Pr'ythee, Cynthia, look behind you,
'Age and wrinkles will o'ertake you;
'Then too late desire will find you,
'When the power must forsake you:
'Think, O think o'th' sad condition,
'To be past, yet wish fruition.'

Mel. You shall have my thanks below.

[*To the music, they go out.*

Enter Sir Paul Plyant *and Lady* Plyant.

Sir P. Gads bud! I am provoked into a fermentation, as my Lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in story?

L. P. Sir Paul, have patience; let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir P. Pray your Ladyship give me leave to be angry ——I'll rattle him up, I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *certiorari*.

L. P. You firk him! I'll firk him myself. Pray, Sir Paul, hold you contented.

'*Cyn.* Bless me, what makes my father in such a pas-'sion!———I never saw him thus before.'

Sir. P. Hold yourself contented, my Lady Plyant,—I find passion coming upon me by inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

L. P. How now! will you be pleased to retire, and—

Sir P. No marry will I not be pleased; I am pleased to be angry, that's my pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean!

L. P. Gads my life, the man's distracted; why how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontroulable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern!

Sir P. It concerns me, and only me:——Besides, I am not to be governed at all times. When I am in tranquility my Lady Plyant shall command Sir Paul; but when I am provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason,—as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.———

L. P. He's hot-headed still! 'tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.

Sir P. No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortified, that I am thus exasperated.—But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violator of my fame.

L. P. 'Tis my honour that is concerned, and the violation was intended to me.——Your honour! you have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore don't provoke me.

Sir P. Hum, gads-bud she says true——Well, my Lady, march on, I will fight under you then; I am convinced as far as passion will permit.

[*Lady* Pl. *and Sir* Paul *come up to* Mellefont.

L. P Inhuman and treacherous———

Sir P. Thou serpent, and first tempter of womankind.———

Cyn. Bless me, Sir! Madam, what mean you?

Sir P. Thy, Thy, come away Thy, touch him not; come hither, girl, go not near him, there is nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of Nilus is in his belly, he will eat thee up alive.

L. P. Dishonourable, impudent creature!

Mel. For Heaven's sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this language?

L. P. Have I behaved myself with all the decorum and nicety, befitting the person of Sir Paul's wife? Have I preserved my honour as it were in a snow-house for

theſe three years paſt? Have I been white and unſullied even by Sir Paul himſelf?

Sir P. Nay, ſhe has been an invincible wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

L. P. Have I, I ſay, preſerved myſelf like a fair ſheet of paper for you to make a blot upon?

Sir P. And ſhe ſhall make a ſimile with any woman in England.

Mel. I am ſo amazed, I know not what to ſay.

Sir P. Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature; gads-bud ſhe's a wife for a cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a ſtalking horſe, to ſtand before you while you take aim at my wife? Gads-bud I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be appeaſed again.

Mel. Hell and damnation! this is my aunt; ſuch malice can be engendered no where elſe. [*Aſide.*

L. P. Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his ſight; leave me to ſtrike him with the remorſe of his intended crime.

Cyn. Pray Sir, ſtay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir P. Innocent! Why, hark'ee, come hither, Thy, hark'ee, I had it from his aunt, my ſiſter Touchwood—Gads-bud, he does not care a farthing for any thing of thee, but thy portion; why, he's in love with my wife; he would have tantalized thee, and made a cuckold of thy poor father,—and that would certainly have broke my heart—I am ſure if ever I ſhould have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I ſhould die of them, like a child that was cutting his teeth——— I ſhould indeed, Thy——therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

Cyn. I muſt obey. [*Exeunt Sir* Paul *and* Cynthia.

L. P. Oh, ſuch a thing! the impiety of it ſtartles me—to wrong ſo good, ſo fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly—'Tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it———

Mel. But the greateſt villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the villainy of ſuch a fact, is the villainy of aſperſing me with the guilt. How? Which way was I to wrong her? For yet I underſtand you not.

L. P.

L. P. Why, gads my life, couſin Mellefont, you cannot be ſo peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you with it to your face; for, now Sir Paul is gone, you are *corum nobus.*

Mel. By Heaven I love her more than life, or———

L. P. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell of this and that, and every thing in the world, but give me mathematical demonſtration, anſwer me directly——But I have not patience——Oh! the impiety of it, as I was ſaying, and the unparalleled wickedneſs! O merciful father! How could you think to reverſe nature ſo, to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother?

Mel. The daughter to procure the mother!

L. P. Ay, for tho' I am not Cynthia's own mother, I am her father's wife, and that's near enough to make it inceſt.

Mel. Inceſt! O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction. [*Aſide.*

L. P. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter only to make a cuckold of the father; and then ſeducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas*; O conſider it, what would you have to anſwer for, if you ſhould provoke me to frailty? Alas! humanity is feeble, Heaven knows! very feeble, and unable to ſupport itſelf.

Mel. Where am I? Is it day? and am I awake? Madam———

L. P. And nobody knows how circumſtances may happen together;——to my thinking, now I could reſiſt the ſtrongeſt temptation——but yet I know, 'tis impoſſible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to aſk you one queſtion.———

L. P. O lord, aſk me the queſtion! I'll ſwear I'll refuſe it; I ſwear I'll deny it—therefore don't aſk me; nay you ſhan't aſk me, I ſwear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a turky-cock; O fye, couſin Mellefont.

Mel. Nay, Madam, hear me; I mean———

L. P. Hear you, no, no; I'll deny you firſt, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing.——Hearing is one of the ſenſes, and all the ſenſes are fallible; I won't truſt my honour, I aſſure you; my honour is infallible and uncomatible.

Mel. For Heaven's ſake, Madam.

L. P. O name it no more——Bleſs me, how can you talk of Heaven, and have ſo much wickedneſs in your heart? May be you don't think it a ſin,——they ſay ſome of you gentlemen don't think it a ſin——may be it is no ſin to them that don't think it ſo; indeed, if I did not think it a ſin——but ſtill my honour, if it were no ſin——but then to marry my daughter for the convenience of frequent opportunities——I'll never conſent to that; as ſure as can be I'll break the match.

Mel. Death and amazement———Madam, upon my knees———

L. P. Nay, nay, riſe up; come, you ſhall ſee my good-nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his paſſion: 'tis not your fault, nor I ſwear it is not mine.——How can I help it if I have charms? And how can you help it if you are made a captive? I ſwear it is pity it ſhould be a fault——but my honour——well, but your honour too—but the ſin!—well, but the neceſſity—O lord, here's ſomebody coming, I dare not ſtay.——Well, you muſt conſider of your crime, and ſtrive as much as can be againſt it—ſtrive, be ſure—but don't be melancholic, don't deſpair——but never think that I'll grant you any thing; O lord, no;—but be ſure you lay aſide all thoughts of the marriage; for tho' I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind for your paſſion to me, yet it will make me jealous—O lord, what did I ſay? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I muſt not love you—therefore don't hope—but don't deſpair neither—O, they're coming, I muſt fly. [*Exit.*

Mel. [*after a pauſe.*] So then——ſpite of my care and foreſight I am caught, caught in my ſecurity.—Yet this was but a ſhallow artifice, 'unworthy of my Machia-'velian aunt.' There muſt be more behind, this is but the firſt flaſh, the priming of her engine; deſtruction follows hard, if not moſt preſently prevented.

Enter

Enter Maſkwell.

Maſkwell, welcome, thy preſence is a view of land, appearing to my ſhipwrecked hopes; the witch has raiſed the ſtorm, and her miniſters have done their work; you ſee the veſſels are parted.

Mask. I know it; I met Sir Paul towing away Cynthia. Come, trouble not your head, I'll join you togegether ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There's comfort in a hand ſtretched out to one that's ſinking, though never ſo far off.

Mask. No ſinking, nor no danger——Come, cheer up; why you don't know that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee;——nay, I am your greateſt enemy, and ſhe does but journey-work under me.

Mel. Ha! how's this?

Mask. What do ye think of my being employed in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha, by Heaven it is true; I have undertaken to break the match, I have undertaken to make your uncle diſinherit you, to get you turned out of doors, and to——ha, ha, ha, I can't tell you for laughing——Oh, ſhe has opened her heart to me——I am to turn you a grazing, and to—ha, ha, ha, marry Cynthia myſelf; there's a plot for you.

Mel. Ha! O ſee, I ſee my riſing ſun! light breaks thro' clouds upon me, and I ſhall live in day——O my Maſkwell! how ſhall I thank or praiſe thee; thou haſt outwitted woman.—But tell me, how couldſt thou thus get into her confidence? Ha! how? But was it her contrivance to perſuade my Lady Plyant into this extravagant belief?

Mask. It was, and to tell you the truth I encouraged it for your diverſion; tho' it make you a little uneaſy for the preſent, yet the reflexion of it muſt needs be entertaining—I warrant ſhe was very violent at firſt.

Mel. Ha, ha, ha, ay, a very fury; but I was moſt afraid of her violence at laſt—If you had not come as you did, I don't know what ſhe might have attempted.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha, I know her temper.—Well, you muſt know then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles; 'till at laſt I pretended to have been long ſecretly

in

n love with Cynthia; that did my buſineſs; that convinced your aunt I might be truſted; ſince it was as much my intereſt as hers to break the match: then, ſhe thought my jealouſy might qualify me to aſſiſt her in her revenge. And, in ſhort, in that belief told me the ſecrets of her heart. At length, we made this agreement, if I accompliſh her deſigns (as I told you before) ſhe has engaged to put Cynthia with all her fortune into my power.

Mel. She is moſt gracious in her favour.——Well, and dear Jack, how haſt thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you ſtay to hear it now: for I don't know but ſhe may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole matter; be here in this gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our conſultation may be over.

Mel. I will; 'till then ſucceſs attend thee. [*Exit.*

Mask. 'Till then ſucceſs will attend me; for when I meet you I meet the only obſtacle to my fortune. Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatſoever I commit of treachery or deceit ſhall be imputed to me as a merit—Treachery, what treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendſhip, and ſets men right upon their firſt foundations. Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties; but the name of rival cuts them all aſunder, and is a general acquittance—Rival is equal, and Love, like Death, an univerſal leveller of mankind. Ha! but is there not ſuch a thing as honeſty? Yes, and whoſoever has it about him, bears an enemy in his breaſt: for your honeſt man, as I take it, is that nice, ſcrupulous, conſcientious perſon who will cheat nobody but himſelf; ſuch another coxcomb as your wife man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himſelf. Ha, ha, ha; well, for wiſdom and honeſty, give me cunning and hypocriſy; Oh, 'tis ſuch a pleaſure to angle for fair-faced fools!—Then that hungry gudgeon Credulity will bite at any thing——Why, let me ſee, I have the ſame face, the ſame words and accents when I ſpeak what I do think, and when I ſpeak what I do not think——the very ſame——and dear diſſimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

Why

Why will mankind be fools, and be deceiv'd?
And why are friends' and lovers' oaths believ'd?
When each who searches strictly his own mind,
May so much fraud and power of baseness find.

[*Exit.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

Enter Lord Touchwood, *and Lady* Touchwood.

Lady Touchwood.

MY Lord, can you blame my brother Plyant, if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? The contract is void by this unheard of impiety.

Ld. T. I don't believe it true; he has better principles ——pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my Lady Plyant has a large eye, and would centre every thing in her own circle; 'tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made Sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

L. T. You censure hardly, my Lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

Ld. T. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

L. T. Nay, my Lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for, in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary.

Ld. T. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too before it had been believed———

L. T. So I suppose there was.

Ld. T. How? Where? When?

L. T. That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

Ld. T. I don't know that. [*Half aside.*

L. T. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

Ld. T.

Ld. T. No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

L. T. His defence! Bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing?

Ld. T. You believe it then?

L. T. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's disadvantage; besides, I find, my Lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge——Don't ask me my reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Ld. T. I am amazed! Here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, Madam? You can have no interest wherein I am not concerned, and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

L. T. But those which cause my disquiet I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my Lord, don't press me.

Ld. T. Don't oblige me to press you.

L. T. Whatever it was, 'tis past; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore, let me beg you to rest satisfied.——

Ld. T. When you have told me, I will ——

L. T. You won't.

Ld. T. By my life, my dear, I will.

L. T. What if you cannot.

Ld. T. How? Then I must know; nay, I will. No more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual peace to come; upon your duty——

L. T. Nay, my Lord, you need say no more to make me lay my heart before you, but don't be thus transported; compose yourself; it is not of concern to make you lose one minute's temper; 'tis not, indeed, my dear.—'Nay, by this kiss you shan't be angry.' O lord, I wish I had not told you any thing——Indeed, my Lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleased, I'll tell you.

Ld. T.

Ld. T. Well, well.

L. T. Nay, but will you be calm?——Indeed it is nothing but——

Ld. T. But what?

L. T. But will you promise me not to be angry?——Nay, you must—not to be angry with Mellefont—I dare swear he's sorry—and were it to do again, would not——

Ld. T. Sorry, for what? 'Death, you rack me with delay.

L. T. Nay, no great matter, only——Well, I have your promise— pho, why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it looked oddly.

Ld. T. Confusion and Hell, what do I hear!

L. T. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me upon upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my Lord—ha, ha, ha. Well, but that's all—'Now 'you have it;' well, remember your promise, my Lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

Ld. T. No, no, no—Damnation!

L. T. Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—only misplaced, that's all.—But if it were more 'tis over now, and all is well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope—for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

Ld. T. These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! 'Death, I'll have him stripped and turned naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous brute!

L. T. Oh, for Heaven's sake, my Lord, you'll ruin me if you take such public notice of it, it will be a town-talk: consider your own and my honour—Nay, I told you, you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Ld. T. Before I've done I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster! How long?

L. T. Lord, I don't know:——I wish my lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more 'till you are yourself. Pray, my Lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder—Yet, I confess, I cannot blame you; for I think

think I was never so surprized in my life—Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness—But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper. I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my Lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all——Will you, my Lord?

Ld. T. I will——I am mute with wonder.

L. T. Well, but go now, here is somebody coming.

Ld. T. Well, I go—You won't stay, for I would hear more of this. [*Exit.*

L. T. I follow instantly——So.

Enter Maskwell.

Mask. This was a master-piece, and did not need my help—though I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

L. T. Have you seen Mellefont?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

L. T. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. Secure in my assistance, he seemed not much afflicted, but rather laughed at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot, yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

L. T. Expedition indeed; for all we do must be performed in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up, lest my Lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately——My Lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means; therefore you must aggravate my Lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.——What think you of mentioning me?

L. T. How?

Mask. To my Lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: 'tho' my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threa-

'tened

'tened the next time he attempted any thing of that 'kind, to discover it to my Lord.'

L. T. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my Lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head——to cheat you as well as the rest. [*Aside.*

L. T. I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindered him once from forcing me.

Mask. Excellent! your Ladyship has a most improving fancy. You had best go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

L. T. When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth. [*Exit.*

Mask. I will not fail.——I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox, I have lost all my appetite to her; yet she's a fine woman, and I loved her once. 'But I don't know, since I have been 'in a great measure kept by her, the case is altered;' what was my pleasure is become my duty: and I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her husband. Should she smoke my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damned penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble ardour and ecstasy, that's resolved: How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before fruition! Pox on it, that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst. Ha! yonder comes Mellefont thoughtful. Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha! by Heaven I have it—if I can speak to my Lord before—'Was 'it my brain or Providence? no matter which'—I will deceive them all, and yet secure myself, 'twas a lucky thought! Well, this double-dealing is a jewel. Here he comes, now for me——

[Maskwell *pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.*

Enter Mellefont *musing*.

Mask. Mercy on us, what will the wickedneſs of this world come to?

Mel. How now, Jack? What, ſo full of contemplation that you run over!

Mask. I'm glad you are come, for I could not contain myſelf any longer, and was juſt going to give vent to a ſecret, which nobody but you ought to drink down.——Your aunt is juſt gone from hence.

Mel. And having truſted thee with the ſecrets of her ſoul, thou art villainouſly bent to diſcover them all to me, ha?

Mask. I am afraid my frailty leans that way——But I don't know whether I can in honour diſcover them all.

Mel. All, all man. What, you may in honour betray her as far as ſhe betrays herſelf. No tragical deſign upon my perſon, I hope.

Mask. No, but it is a comical deſign upon mine.

Mel. What doſt thou mean?

Mask. Liſten and be dumb——We have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin——

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heireſs——Well.

Mask. And whereas pleaſure is generally paid with miſchief, what miſchief I do is to be paid with pleaſure.

Mel. So when you've ſwallowed the potion, you ſweeten your mouth with a plumb.

Mask. You are merry, Sir, but I ſhall probe your conſtitution. In ſhort, the price of your baniſhment is to be paid with the perſon of——

Mel. Of Cynthia, and her fortune—Why you forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no——So far you are right; and I am, as an earneſt of that bargain, to have full and free poſſeſſion of the perſon of——your aunt.

Mel. Ha!——Pho, you trifle.

Mask. By this light, I am ſerious; all raillery apart—I knew 'twould ſtun you:——This evening at eight ſhe will receive me in her bed-chamber.

Mel. Hell and the Devil, is ſhe abandoned of all grace—Why the woman is poſſeſſed——

Mask. Well, will you go in my ſtead?

Mel. By Heaven into a hot furnace ſooner.

Mask.

Mask. No, you would not—it would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

Mel. What do ye mean?

Mask. Mean? Not to disappoint the lady, I assure you ——Ha, ha, ha, how gravely he looks——Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for Heaven's sake, dear Maskwell?

Mask. Why thus—I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprize your aunt and me together; counterfeit a rage against me, and I will make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 'twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. Let me adore thee, my better genius! By Heaven I think it is not in the power of Fate to disappoint my hopes——My hopes, my certainty!

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here within a quarter of eight, and give you notice. [*Exit.*

Mel. Good fortune ever go along with thee.

Enter Careless.

Care. Mellefont, get out of the way, my Lady Plyant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight——Tho' she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? She is convinced that I don't care for her.

Care. I cannot get an answer from her that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, her religion, or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole story of Sir Paul's nine years courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the stairs before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which, since the day of his marriage, he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night-cap, and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding night.

Mel. That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging—For on that night he creeps in at the bed's feet, like a gulled Bassa that has married a relation of the Grand Signior, 'and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did she not tell you at what a distance she keeps him? He has confessed to me, that but at some certain times, that is, I suppose, when she apprehends being with child, he never has the privilege of using the familiarity of a husband with a wife. He was once given to scrambling with his hands, and sprawling in his sleep, and ever since she has swaddled him up in blankets, and his hands and feet swathed down, and so put to bed; and there he lies with a great beard, like a Russian bear upon a drift of snow. You are very great with him,' I wonder he never told you his grievances; he will, I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish!——But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity, by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

Care. Nay, I don't despair—But still she has a grudging to you——I talked to her t'other night at my Lord Froth's masquerade, when I am satisfied she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find women are not the same bare-faced and in masks——and a vizor disguises their inclinations as much as their faces.

Mel. 'Tis a mistake; for women may most properly be said to be unmasked when they wear vizors; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of countenance, and next to being in the dark, or alone, they are most truly themselves in a vizor-mask.' Here they come. I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a *billet-doux* into her hand: for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her 'till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her. [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter Sir Paul *and Lady* Plyant.

Sir P. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr. Careless? You would be in private?

Care. You bring that along with you, Sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir P. O, sweet Sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

L. P. Sir Paul, what a phrase was there! You will be making answers, and taking that upon you which ought to lie upon me: that you should have so little breeding to think Mr. Careless did not apply himself to me. Pray, what have you to entertain any body's privacy? I swear and declare in the face of the world I'm ready to blush for your ignorance.

Sir P. I acquiesce, my Lady; but don't snub so loud. [*Aside to her.*

L. P. Mr. Careless, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those obligations which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those circumstances, I am sure I should rather attempt it than any thing in the world, [*Courtesies.*] for I'm sure there's nothing in the world that I would rather. [*Courtesies.*] But I know Mr. Careless is so great a critic, and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me———

Care. O Heavens! Madam, you confound me.

Sir P. Gads-bud, she's a fine person———

L. P. O lord! Sir, pardon me; we women have not those advantages: I know my own imperfections—but at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world that nobody is more sensible of favours and things; for, with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr. Careless, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious——— You'll pardon my want of expression.

Care. O, your Ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

L. P. You are so obliging, Sir.

Care. Your Ladyship is so charming.

Sir P. So, now, now; now, my Lady.

L. P. So well bred.

Care. So surprizing.

L. P. So well dress't, so *bonne mien*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable ——

Sir P. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. O lord, I beseech you, Madam, don't ——

L. P. So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, Sir.

Care. For Heaven's sake, Madam —— I am quite out of countenance.

Sir P. And my Lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear—Gad's-bud, you may talk of my Lady Froth.

Care. O fy, fy, not to be named of a day---My Lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments —— but it is when my Lady Plyant is not thought of —— If that can ever be.

L. P. O, you overcome me —— That is so excessive.

Sir P. Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

Care. O, Sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

Sir P. Your humble servant; I am, I thank Heaven, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence —— Ay, truly, Mr. Careless, my Lady is a great blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see —— if it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I am so sorry—O, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing ——

Enter Boy with a letter.

L. P. How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes?

Sir P. Gad so, gads-bud ——— Tim, carry it to my Lady, you should have carried it to my Lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your worship.

Sir P. Well, well, my Lady reads all letters first —— Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, Tim.

Boy. No, and please you. [*Exit.*

Sir P.

Sir P. A humour of my wife's; you know women have little fancies——But as I was telling you, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, Sir Paul?

Sir P. Why, I have, I thank Heaven, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this. 'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say; for indeed, Mr. Careless, I am mightily beholden to Providence---A poor unworthy sinner---But if I had a son, ah! that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed, I cannot refrain tears when it comes into my mind. [*Cries.*

Care. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied; my Lady is a fine likely woman.

Sir P. Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day——Indeed she is, Mr. Careless, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old——

Sir P. Alas! that's not it, Mr. Careless: ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do; that's not it, Mr. Careless; no, no, that's not it.

Care. No, what can be the matter then?

Sir P. You'll scarcely believe me when I shall tell you ——my Lady is so nice——It is very strange, but it is true: too true—she is so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a man for the world.——'At least not 'above once a year; I am sure I have found it so; and 'alas, what's once a year to an old man, who would do 'good in his generation!' Indeed, it is true, Mr. Careless, it breaks my heart—I am her husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more familiarity with her person—'as to that matter'——than with my own mother——no indeed.

Care.

Care. Alas-a-day! this is a lamentable ſtory; my Lady muſt be told on't; ſhe muſt, i'faith, Sir Paul; 'tis an injury to the world.

Sir P. Ah! would to Heaven you would, Mr. Careleſs; you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you, what, we muſt have a ſon ſome way or other.

Sir P. Indeed, I ſhould be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. Careleſs.

L. P. Here, Sir Paul, it is from your ſteward, here's a return of 600 l. you may take fifty of it for the next half-year. [*Gives him the letter.*

Enter Lord Froth *and* Cynthia.

Sir P. How does my girl? Come hither to thy father, poor lamb, thou art melancholic.

Ld. F. Heaven, Sir Paul, you amaze me of all things in the world—You are never pleaſed but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no company; ah! then 'tis ſuch a ſight to ſee ſome teeth——Sure you are a great admirer of my Lady Whifler, Mr. Sneer, and Sir Laurence Loud, and that gang.

Sir P. I vow and ſwear ſhe is a very merry woman, but I think ſhe laughs a little too much.

Ld. F. Merry! O lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality——You have been at my Lady Whifler's upon her day, Madam?

Cyn. Yes, my Lord—I muſt humour this fool. [*Aſide.*

Ld. F. Well and how? hee! What is your ſenſe of the converſation?

Cyn. O, moſt ridiculous, a perpetual concert of laughing without any harmony; for ſure, my Lord, to laugh out of time, is as diſagreeable as to ſing out of time or out of tune.

Ld. F. Hee, hee, hee, right; and then my Lady Whifler is ſo ready—ſhe always comes in three bars too ſoon—And then, what do they laugh at? For you know laughing without a jeſt is as impertinent, hee! as——

Cyn. As dancing without a fiddle.

Ld. F. Juſt i'faith, that was at my tongue's end.

Cyn. But that cannot be properly ſaid of them, for I think they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another; and you muſt allow they have

have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

Ld. F. True, as I am a person of honour———For Heaven's sake let us sacrifice them to mirth a little.

[*Enter Boy and whispers Sir* Paul.

Sir P. Gad so—Wife, Wife, my Lady Plyant, I have a word.

L. P. I am busy, Sir Paul, I wonder at your impertinence———

Care. Sir Paul, harkee, I am reasoning the matter you know: Madam, if your Ladyship please we'll discourse of this in the next room. [*Ex. Lady* P. *and* Care.

Sir P. O ho, I wish you good success, I wish you good success. Boy, tell my Lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below. [*Exit Sir* Paul.

Enter Lady Froth *and* Brisk.

L. F. Then you think that episode between Susan the dairy-maid, and our coachman, is not amiss; you know I may suppose the dairy in town, as well as in the country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish—But then being an heroic poem, had you not better call him a Charioteer? Charioteer sounds great: besides your Ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun——And you know the sun is called Heaven's Charioteer.

L. F. Oh, infinitely better; I am extremely beholden to you for the hint; stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [*Pulls out a paper.*] Let me see here, you know what goes before———the comparison, you know. [*Reads.*]

For as the sun shines every day,
So of our coachman I may say.

Brisk. I am afraid that simile won't do in wet weather ——Because you say the sun shines every day.

L. F. No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coachman, for you know there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

Brisk. Right, right, that saves all.

L. F. Then I don't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though we don't see him.

Brisk.

Brisk. Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

L. F. Well, you shall hear—Let me see.

[*Reads.*] For as the sun shines every day,
So of our coachman I may say;
He shews his drunken fiery face,
Just as the sun does, more or less.

Brisk. That's right, all's well, all's well. More or less.

L. F. [*Reads.*]
And when at night his labour's done,
Then too, like Heaven's charioteer, the sun:
Ay, Charioteer does better.
Into the dairy he descends,
And there his whipping and his driving ends;
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,
His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.
For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so——

Brisk. Incomparable well and proper, 'egad—But I have one exception to make——Don't you think bilk (I know it is good rhyme) but don't you think bilk and fare too like a hackney coachman?

L. F. I swear and vow I am afraid so——And yet our Jehu was a hackney coachman when my Lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I am answered, if Jehu was a hackney coachman—You may put that in the marginal notes tho' to prevent criticism—Only mark it with a small asterism, and say—Jehu was formerly a hackney coachman.

L. F. I will; you'll oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

Brisk. With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

Ld. F. Hee, hee, hee, my dear, have you done?——Won't you join with us? we were laughing at my Lady Whisler and Mr. Sneer.

L. F. ——Ay, my dear——Were you? Oh filthy Mr. Sneer; he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamic fop, foh——He spent two days together in going about Covent-Garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

Ld F.

Ld. F. O filly! yet his aunt is as fond of him as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk. Who, my Lady Toothless; O, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

Cyn. Fy, Mr. Brisk, eringo is for her cough.

L. F. I have seen her take them half-chewed out of her mouth to laugh, and then put them in again—Foh.

Ld. F. Foh.

L. F. Then she is always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak—and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open———

Brisk. Like an oyster at low ebb, 'egad—Ha, ha, ha.

'*Cyn.* [*Aside.*] Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.'

L. F. Then that t'other great strapping lady——I cannot hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean—But deuce take me, I cannot hit of her name neither——Paints, d'ye say? Why, she lays it on with a trowel——Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plaistered with lime and hair, let me perish.

L. F. Oh, you made a song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. He! 'egad, so I did——My Lord can sing it.

'*Cyn.* O good, my Lord, let us hear it.'

Brisk. 'Tis not a song neither——It is a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it is satire.—'Sing it, my Lord.'

Lord Froth *sings.*

Ancient Phillis has young graces,
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;
Shall I tell you how?
She herself makes her own faces,
And each morning wears a new one?
Where's the wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there is salt in it; my way of writing, 'egad.

Enter Footman.

L. F. How now?

Foot. Your Ladyſhip's chair is come.

L. F. Is nurſe and the child in it?

Foot. Yes, Madam. [*Exit.*

L. F. O, the dear creature! let us go ſee it.

Ld. F. I ſwear, my dear, you'll ſpoil that child with ſending it to and again ſo often; this is the ſeventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

L. F. O-la, I ſwear it's but the ſixth——and I han't ſeen her theſe two hours——The poor dear creature——I ſwear, my Lord, you don't love poor little Sappho,——Come, my dear Cynthia, Mr. Briſk, we'll go ſee Sappho, though my Lord won't.

Cyn. I'll wait upon your Ladyſhip.

Briſk. Pray, Madam, how old is Lady Sappho?

L. F. Three quarters, but I ſwear ſhe has a world of wit, and can ſing a tune already. My Lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to ſee Saph? Pray, my Lord, come ſee little Saph. I knew you could not ſtay. [*Exeunt all but* Cynthia.

'*Cyn.* 'Tis not ſo hard to counterfeit joy in the 'depth of affliction, as to diſſemble mirth in the com-'pany of fools——Why ſhould I call them fools? The 'world thinks better of them; for theſe have quality 'and education, wit and fine converſation, are received 'and admired by the world——If not, they like and 'admire themſelves——And why is not that true wiſ-'dom, for it is happineſs? And for ought I know, we 'have miſapplied the name all this while, and miſtaken 'the thing: ſince

'If happineſs in ſelf-content is plac'd,
'The wiſe are wretched, and fools only bleſs'd.

[*Exit.*

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

'*Enter* Mellefont *and* Cynthia.

'CYNTHIA.

'I Heard him loud as I came by the cloſet-door, and 'my Lady with him; but ſhe ſeemed to moderate 'his paſſion.

Mel.

'*Mel.* Ay, Hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate
'a fire; but I shall counter-work her spells, and ride
'the witch in her own bridle.

'*Cyn.* It is impossible; she'll cast beyond you still——
'I'll lay my life it will never be a match.

'*Mel.* What?

'*Cyn.* Between you and me.

'*Mel.* Why so?

'*Cyn.* My mind gives me it won't——because we are
'both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal,
'and hinder one another in the race; I swear it never
'does well when parties are so agreed—For when people
'walk hand in hand, there's neither overtaking nor
'meeting: we hunt in couples where we both pursue
'the same game, but forget one another; and 'tis be-
'cause we are so near that we don't think of coming to-
'gether.

'*Mel.* Hum, 'egad I believe there's something in it—
'Marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we
'think that we only have it in view, I don't see but
'we have it in our power.

'*Cyn.* Within reach; for example, give me your
'hand; you have looked through the wrong end of the
'perspective all this while; for nothing has been be-
'tween us but our fears.

'*Mel.* I don't know why we should not steal out of
'the house this very moment, and marry one another,
'without consideration, or the fear of repentance. Pox
'o'fortune, portion, settlements, and jointures.

'*Cyn.* Ay, ay, what have we to do with them; you
'know we marry for love.

'*Mel.* Love, love, downright very villainous love.

'*Cyn.* And he that cannot live upon love deserves to
'die in a ditch.—— Here then, I give you my promise,
'in spite of duty, any temptation of wealth, your in-
'constancy, or my own inclination to change————

'*Mel.* To run most wilfully and unreasonably away
'with me this moment, and be married.

'*Cyn.* Hold—Never to marry any body else.

'*Mel.* That's but a kind of negative consent—Why,
'you won't baulk the frolic?

'*Cyn.* If you had not been so assured of your own 'conduct I would not——But 'tis but reasonable that 'since I consent to like a man without the vile consideration of money, he should give me a very evident demonstration of his wit: therefore, let me see you undermine my Lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and 'force her to give her consent, and then——

'*Mel.* I'll do it.

'*Cyn.* And I'll do it.

'*Mel.* This very next ensuing hour of eight o'clock, 'is the last minute of her reign, unless the Devil assist 'her in *propria persona*.

'*Cyn.* Well, if the Devil should assist her, and your 'plot miscarry.——

'*Mel.* Ay, what am I to trust to then?

'*Cyn.* Why, if you give me very clear demonstration 'that it was the Devil, I will allow for irresistible odds. 'But if I find it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky stars, or any thing but the very Devil, I am inexorable: only still I'll keep my word, and live a maid 'for your sake.

'*Mel.* And you won't die one for your own, so still 'there's hope.

'*Cyn.* Here is my mother-in-law, and your friend 'Careless, I would not have them see us together yet.

'[*Exeunt.*'

Enter Careless *and Lady* Plyant.*

L. P. I swear, Mr. Careless, you are very alluring—and say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in the face of the world, never any body gained so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my honour—Well, sure if I escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And despise me. [*Sighing.*

L. P. The last of any man in the world, by my purity; now you make me swear—O, gratitude forbid that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes for the per-

* The fourth act, in representation, begins here.

son

ſon and parts of ſo accompliſhed a perſon, whoſe merit challenges much more, I am ſure, than my illiterate praiſes can deſcription.———

Care. [*In a whining tone.*] Ah, Heavens, Madam, you ruin me with kindneſs; your charming tongue purſues the victory of your eyes, while at your feet your poor adorer dies.

L. P. Ah! very fine.

Care. [*Still whining.*] Ah, why are you ſo fair, ſo bewitching fair? O, let me grow to the ground here, and feaſt upon that hand; O, let me preſs it to my heart, my trembling heart, the nimble movement ſhall inſtruct your pulſe, and teach it to alarm deſire.—Zoons I am almoſt at the end of my cant, if ſhe does not yield quickly. [*Aſide.*

L. P. O that's ſo paſſionate and fine, I cannot hear it—I am not ſafe if I ſtay, and muſt leave you.

Care. And muſt you leave me! Rather let me languiſh out a wretched life, and breathe my ſoul beneath your feet———I muſt ſay the ſame thing over again, and cannot help it. [*Aſide.*

L. P. I ſwear I am ready to languiſh too——O my honour! Whither is it going? I proteſt you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

Care. Can you be ſo cruel?

L. P. O riſe, I beſeech you, ſay no more 'till you riſe—Why did you kneel ſo long? I ſwear I was ſo tranſported I did not ſee it——Well, to ſhew you how far you have gained upon me, I aſſure you, if Sir Paul ſhould die, of all mankind there's none I'd ſooner make my ſecond choice.

Care. O Heaven! I cannot out-live this night without your favour——I feel my ſpirits faint, a general dampneſs over-ſpreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow waſh me for ever from your ſight, and drown me in my tomb.

L. P. O, you have conquered, ſweet, melting, moving Sir, you have conquered—What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to ſuch ſad ſayings.— [*Cries.*

Care. I thank Heaven, they are the ſaddeſt that I ever ſaid—Oh! 'I ſhall never contain laughter.' [*Aſide.*

L. P. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontroulable embraces——Say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how?——' Ah, there's Sir Paul.'

Care. 'Slife, yonder's Sir Paul, but if he were not come, I am so transported I cannot speak——This note will inform you. [*Gives her a note. Exit.*

Enter Sir Paul *and* Cynthia.

Sir P. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—But endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

Cyn. I would obey you to my power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir P. Never to marry! Heavens forbid! Must I neither have sons nor grandsons? Must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue male. Oh, impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my consent, ah? Gads-bud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray don't be angry, Sir; when I swore I had your consent, and therefore I swore.

Sir P. Why then the revoking my consent does annul, or make of none effect your oath; so you may unswear it again——The law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir P. Gads-bud, no matter for that; conscience and law never go together; you must not expect that.

L. P. Ay, but Sir Paul, I conceive if she has sworn, d'ye mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it.—— I'll make up the match again, because Mr. Careless said it would oblige him. [*Aside.*

Sir P. Does your Ladyship conceive so?——Why, I was of that opinion once too——Nay, if your Ladyship conceives so, I am of that opinion again; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady, to know what they intend.

L. P. I am satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wronged.

Cyn. [*Aside.*] I am amazed to find her of our side, for I am sure she loved him.

L. P. I know my Lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides, I have been informed by Mr. Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a pro-

a profound reſpect—That he has owned himſelf to be my admirer, 'tis true, but he was never ſo preſumptuous to entertain any diſhonourable notions of things; ſo that if this be made plain—I don't ſee how my daughter can in conſcience, or honour, or any thing in the world ——

Sir P. Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your mother ſays, child ———

L. P. Plain! I was informed of it by Mr. Careleſs—And I aſſure you Mr. Careleſs is a perſon—that has a moſt extraordinary reſpect and honour for you, Sir Paul.

Cyn. [*Aſide.*] And for your Ladyſhip too, I believe, or elſe you had not changed ſides ſo ſoon; now I begin to find it.

Sir P. I am much obliged to Mr. Careleſs, really, he is a perſon that I have a great value for, not only for that, but becauſe he has a great veneration for your Ladyſhip.

L. P. O la, no indeed, Sir Paul, it is upon your account.

Sir P. No, I proteſt and vow I have no title to his eſteem, but in having the honour to appertain in ſome meaſure to your Ladyſhip, that's all.

L. P. O la, now, I ſwear and declare, it ſhan't be ſo, you are too modeſt, Sir Paul.

Sir P. It becomes me, when there is any compariſon made between ———

L. P. O fy, fy, Sir Paul, you'll put me out of countenance——Your very obedient and affectionate wife, that's all——And highly honoured in that title.

Sir P. Gads-bud I am tranſported! Give me leave to kiſs your Ladyſhip's hand.

'*Cyn.* That my poor father ſhould be ſo very ſilly!' [*Aſide.*

L. P. My lip, indeed, Sir Paul, I ſwear you ſhall.

[*He kiſſes her, and bows very low.*

Sir P. I humbly thank your Ladyſhip—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air——Gads-bud, ſhe was never thus before——Well, I muſt own myſelf beholden to Mr. Careleſs—As ſure as can be this is all his doing—ſomething that he has ſaid; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious friend. Well, your Ladyſhip is of opinion that the match may go forward.

L. P. By all means—Mr. Careleſs has ſatisfied me of the matter.

Sir P. Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath, but have a care of making raſh vows; come hither to me, and kiſs papa.

L. P. I ſwear and declare, I am in ſuch a twitter to read Mr. Careleſs's letter, that I cannot forbear any longer—But though I may read all letters firſt by prerogative, yet I'll be ſure to be unſuſpected this time.—— Sir Paul.

Sir P. Did your Ladyſhip call?

L. P. Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear——Only lend me your letter, which you had from your ſteward to-day: I would look upon the account again; and may be increaſe the allowance.

Sir P. There it is, Madam. Do you want a pen and ink? [*Bows and gives the letter.*

L. P. No, no, nothing elſe, I thank you, Sir Paul—So now I can read my own letter under the cover of his. [*Aſide.*

Sir P. He? and wilt thou bring a grandſon at nine months end---He? A brave chopping boy.—I'll ſettle a thouſand pounds a year upon the rogue as ſoon as ever he looks me in the face, I will Gads-bud. I am overjoyed to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world. For I would fain have ſome reſemblance of myſelf in my poſterity, he, Thy! 'Can-'not you contrive that affair, girl? Do; Gads-bud 'think on thy old father;' heh! Make the young rogue as like as you can.

Cyn. I am glad to ſee you ſo merry, Sir.

Sir P. Merry! Gads-bud I am ſerious! I'll give thee 500l. for every inch of him that reſembles me; ah, this eye, this left eye! A thouſand pounds for this left eye. This has done execution in its time, girl; why, thou haſt my leer, huſſy, juſt thy father's leer.—Let it be tranſmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination---- Why 'tis the mark of our family, Thy; our houſe is diſtinguiſhed by a languiſhing eye, as the houſe of Auſtria is by a thick lip ——Ah! when I was of your age, huſſy, I would have held fifty to one I could have drawn my own picture——Gads-bud, but I could have done——

not

not so much as you neither,——but————nay, don't blush————

Cyn. I don't blush, Sir, for I vow I don't understand.

Sir P. Pshaw, pshaw, you fib, you baggage, you do understand, and you shall understand: Come, don't be so nice; Gads-bud don't learn after your mother-in-law, my Lady here——Marry Heaven forbid that you should follow her example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a vagary, and make a rash resolution on your wedding-night to die a maid, as she did, all were ruined, all my hopes lost————My heart would break, and my estate would be left to the wide world, he! I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a nun, he? Answer me.

Cyn. I am all obedience, Sir, to your commands.

L. P. [*Having read the letter.*] O dear Mr. Careless, I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me as much as I have charmed him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe when 'tis dark. O Crimine! I hope Sir Paul has not seen both letters—— [*Puts the wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*] Sir Paul, here's your letter, to-morrow morning I'll settle accounts to your advantage.

Enter Brisk.

Brisk. Sir Paul, Gad's-bud you are an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir P. O la, what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. Brisk?

Brisk. Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself; you are always brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatched, 'egad, he?

Sir P. Good strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry facetious person, he, he, he. No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

Brisk. The fiddles have stayed this hour in the hall, and my Lord Froth wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

Sir P. Go, go, child, go, get you gone and dance, and be merry; I will come and look at you by and by.—— Where is my son Mellefont?

L. P.

L. P. I'll ſend him to them, I know where he is——

Brisk. Sir Paul, will you ſend Careleſs into the hall if you meet him.

Sir P. I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpoſe. [*Ex. all but* Briſk.

Brisk. So now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practiſe——Ah! my dear Lady Froth! She's a moſt engaging creature, if ſhe were not ſo fond of that damned coxcombly Lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him wit too, to keep in with him——No matter, ſhe's a woman of parts, and 'egad parts will carry her. She ſaid, ſhe would follow me into the gallery——Now to make my approaches—Hem, hem! Ah, Ma- [*Bows.*] dam!——Pox on't, why ſhould I diſparage my parts by thinking what to ſay; None but dull rogues *think*: witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expences, while your blockheads, like poor needy ſcoundrels, are forced to examine their ſtock, and forecaſt the charges of the day. Here ſhe comes; I'll ſeem not to ſee her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

Enter Lady Froth.

[Briſk *ſings, walking about.*] I'm ſick with love, ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come cure me.

I'm ſick with, &c.

O ye powers! O my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth! My Lady Froth! Heigho! Break heart; Gods I thank you. [*Stands muſing with his arms acroſs.*

L. F. O Heavens, Mr. Briſk! What's the matter?

Brisk. My Lady Froth! Your Ladyſhip's moſt humble ſervant——The matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing at all 'egad. I was fallen into the moſt agreeable amuſement in the whole province of contemplation: That is all——(I'll ſeem to conceal my paſſion, and that will look like reſpect.) [*Aſide.*

L. F. Bleſs me, why did you call out upon me ſo loud?——

Brisk. O lord, I Madam! I beſeech your Ladyſhip——When?

L. F. Juſt now as I came in; bleſs me, why don't you know it?

Brisk.

Brisk. Not I, let me perish——But did I? Strange! I confess your Ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination, but——but did I indeed?——To see how love and murder will out. But did I really name my Lady Froth?

L. F. Three times aloud, as I love letters——But did you talk of love? O Parnassus! Who would have thought Mr. Brisk could have been in love, ha, ha, ha. O Heavens! I thought you could have no mistress but the nine muses.

Brisk. No more I have, 'egad, for I adore them all in your Ladyship——Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic or airy upon it; the deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your Ladyship has made the discovery.

L. F. O, be merry by all means——Prince Volscius in love! Ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. O, barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha. The deuce take me, I cannot help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha; yet by Heavens I have a violent passion for your Ladyship seriously.

L. F. Seriously! Ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Seriously, ha, ha, ha. Gad I have for all I laugh.

L. F. Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? Ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Me 'egad, ha ha.

L. F. No, the deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for hang me if I have not a violent passion for Mr. Brisk, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Seriously?

L. F. Seriously, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. That's well enough, let me perish, ha, ha, ha. O miraculous, what a happy discovery! Ay, my dear charming Lady Froth!

L. F. Oh, my adored Mr. Brisk! [*Embrace.*

Enter Lord Froth.

Ld. F. The company are all ready——How now!

Brisk. Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord. [*Softly to her.*]

L. F. Take no notice——but observe me——Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then

then join hands again; I could teach my Lord this dance purely, but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man. Oh, here's my Lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

[*They pretend to practise part of a country dance.*

Ld. F. ——Oh, I see there's no harm yet——But I don't like this familiarity. [*Aside.*

L. F. —Shall you and I do our close dance, to shew Mr. Brisk?

Ld. F. No, my dear, do it with him.

L. F. I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the way.

Brisk. That's good 'egad, that's good; deuce take me I can hardly hold laughing in his face. [*Aside.*

Ld. F. Any other time, my dear, or we'll dance it below.

L. F. With all my heart.

Brisk. Come, my Lord, I'll wait on you—My charming witty angel! [*To her.*

L. F. We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lady Plyant *and* Careless.

L. P. O Mr. Careless, Mr. Careless, I'm ruined, I'm undone.

Care. What's the matter, Madam?

L. P. O the unluckiest accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heaven forbid! What is it?

L. P. I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary and premunire! I'm all over in an universal agitation, I dare swear every circumstance of me trembles.——O your letter, your letter! By an unfortunate mistake, I have given Sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

L. P. O yonder he comes reading of it, for Heaven's sake step in here and advise me quickly, before he sees. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Paul *with the letter.*

Sir P. —O Providence, what a conspiracy have I discovered——But let me see to make an end on't——— [*Reads.*] Hum——*After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery. If Sir* Paul *should surprize us, I have a commission from*

from him to treat with you about the very matter of fact—— Matter of fact! Very pretty; it seems, then, I am conducing to my own cuckoldom; why this is a very traiterous position of taking up arms by my authority against my person! Well, let me see—*'Till then I languish in expectation of my adored charmer.*

Dying Ned Careless.

Gads-bud, would that were matter of fact too. Die and be damned for a Judas Maccabeus and Iscariot both. O friendship, what art thou but a name! Henceforward let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold: for whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the way to his bed, and there return his caresses with interest to his wife. 'Have I for this been pinioned night after 'night for three years past? Have I been swathed in 'blankets 'till I have been even deprived of motion?' Have I approached the marriage-bed with reverence, as to a sacred shrine, 'and denied myself the enjoyment of 'lawful domestic pleasures to preserve its purity,' and must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O my Lady Plyant, you were chaste as ice, but you are melted now, and false as water.——But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence, sure, poor Sir Paul, thy heart would break.

Enter Lady Plyant.

L. P. So, Sir, I see you have read the letter—Well, now, Sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? Has he been treacherous, or did you give his insolence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger.*] Look, read it! Gad's my life, if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you. Ungrateful monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a plot upon my honour; your guilty cheeks confess it: Oh, where shall wronged virtue fly for reparation! I'll be divorced this instant.

Sir P. Gads-bud, what shall I say? This is the strangest surprize! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world, or no.

L. P. I thought I should try you, false man. I that never dissembled in my life; yet to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless, and found out that contrivance to let you see this letter; which now I find was of your own inditing ——— I do, Heathen, I do; see my face no more; 'I'll be divorced 'presently.'

Sir P. O strange, what will become of me!——I am so amazed, and so overjoyed, so afraid, and so sorry.—— But did you give me this letter on purpose, he? Did you?

L. P. Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly———

Sir P. Hold, stay, I beseech your Ladyship——I am so overjoyed, stay, I'll confess all.

L. P. What will you confess, Jew?

Sir P. Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter—Nay, hear me, I beseech your Ladyship: The Devil take me now if he did not go beyond my commission——If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; Gads-bud, only for poor Sir Paul, I am an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

L. P. Why, is not here matter of fact?

Sir P. Ay, but by your own virtue and continency that matter of fact is all his own doing.—I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which lie all in your Ladyship's breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.——

L. P. Did you so, Presumption! 'Oh! he comes, 'the Tarquin comes; I cannot bear his sight.' [*Exit.*

Enter Careless.

Care. Sir Paul, I am glad I have met with you; 'egad I have said all I could, but cannot prevail——Then my friendship to you has carried me a little further in this matter———

Sir P. Indeed——Well, Sir—I'll dissemble with him a little. [*Aside.*

Care. Why, faith, I have in my time known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my Lady's virtue—And when I could

could not prevail for you, 'egad I pretended to be in love myself—but all in vain, she would not hear a word upon that subject; then I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do; though, by this light, I believe her virtue is impregnable.

Sir P. O Providence! Providence! What discoveries are here made! Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir P. I cannot tell you, I am so overjoyed; come along with me to my Lady, I cannot contain myself; come my dear friend.

Care. So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [*Aside.*

[*Exit.*

Enter Mellefont *and* Maskwell *from different doors.*

Mel. Maskwell, I have been looking for you——It is within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My Lady is just gone into my Lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

Mel. He? You say true.

Mask. You had best make haste, for after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my Lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

Mel. I go this moment: Now, Fortune, I defy thee.

[*Exit.*

Mask. I confess you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion; the appearance is very fair, but I have an after-game to play that shall turn the tables, and here comes the man that I must manage.

Enter Lord Touchwood.

Ld. T. Maskwell, you are the man I wished to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the way of your Lordship's commands.

Ld. T. I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concerned me or my family.

Mask. I were a villain else—I am bound by duty and

gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your Lordſhip's ſervant.

Ld. T. Enough——You are my friend; I know it: Yet there has been a thing in your knowledge which has concerned me nearly, that you have concealed from me.

Mask. My Lord!

Ld. T. Nay, I excuſe your friendſhip to my unnatural nephew thus far——But I know you have been privy to his impious deſigns upon my wife. This evening ſhe has told me all: her good-nature concealed it as long as was poſſible; but he perſeveres ſo in villainy, that ſhe has told me even you were weary of diſſuading him, tho' you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

Mask. I am ſorry, my Lord, I cannot make you an anſwer; this is an occaſion in which I would not willingly be ſilent.

Ld. T. I know you would excuſe him—And I know as well that you cannot.

Mask. Indeed I was in hopes it had been but a youthful heat that might have ſoon boiled over; but——

Ld. T. Say on.

Mask. I have nothing more to ſay, my Lord——but to expreſs my concern; for I think his frenzy increaſes daily.

Ld. T. How! give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may juſtify my dealing with him to the world, and ſhare my fortunes.

Mask. O my Lord! conſider that is hard: beſides, time may work upon him: then, for me to do it! I have profeſſed an everlaſting friendſhip to him.

Ld. T. He is your friend, and what am I?

Mask. I am anſwered.

Ld. T. Fear not his diſpleaſure; I will put you out of his and Fortune's power; and for that thou art ſcrupulouſly honeſt, I will ſecure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any diſcovery that you ſhall make me. Can you give me a demonſtrative proof? Speak.

Mask. I wiſh I could not——To be plain, my Lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to diſſuade him from a deſign, which I ſuſpect; and if I had

not succeeded, to have informed your Lordship of what I knew.

Ld. T. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

Mask. He has owned nothing to me of late, and what I mean now is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your Lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence there, in that lobby by my Lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Ld T. I will.

Mask. My duty to your Lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

Ld. T. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes. [*Exeunt*

SCENE *opening, shews Lady* Touchwood's *chamber.*

Mellefont *solus.*

Mel. Pray Heaven my aunt keep touch with her assignation.——Oh, that her Lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see—Hist, she comes——Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post.

[*Goes behind the hangings.*

Enter Lady Touchwood.

L. T. 'Tis eight o'clock: methinks I should have found him here—Who does not prevent the hour of love, outstays the time; for to be duly punctual is too slow.—I was accusing you of neglect.

Enter Maskwell.

Mellefont *absconding.*

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

L. T. You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame ——A ready answer shews you were prepared.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression——

L. T. Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of joy has made me stupid! Thus may my lips be ever closed. [*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh, who

would not lose his speech upon condition to have joys above it!

L. T. Hold, let me lock the door first.

[*Goes to the door.*

Mask. [*Aside.*] That I believed; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

L. T. So, that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss——

Mel. And may all treachery be thus discovered.

[*Leaps out.*

L. T. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Mel. Villain! [*Offers to draw.*

Mask. Nay then, there's but one way. [*Runs out.*

Mel. Say you so, were you provided for an escape? Hold, Madam, you have no more holes to your burrow, I stand between you and this sally-port.

L. T. Thunder strike thee dead for this deceit, immediate lightning blast thee, me, and the whole world—— Oh! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

Mel. Be patient——

L. T. Be damned.

Mel. Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

L. T. I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. O Madam, have a care of dying unprepared, I doubt that you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

L. T. Oh! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn? Has Hell no remedy?

Mel. None. Hell has served you even as Heaven has done, left you to yourself.—You are in a kind of Erasmus Paradise; yet if you please, you may make it a purgatory; and with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to a good account.

L. T. [*Aside.*] Hold in my passion, and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble.

[*She weeps.*

Mel.

Mel. You have been to blame——I like thoſe tears, and hope they are of the pureſt kind—Penitential tears.

L. T. O, the ſcene was ſhifted quick before me—I had not time to think——I was ſurprized to ſee a monſter in the glaſs, and now I find 'tis myſelf: Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice——O conſider, conſider how fatal you have been to me, 'you have already killed the quiet of this 'life.' The love of you was the firſt wandering fire that e'er miſled my ſteps, and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

L. T. O be not cruelly incredulous——How can you doubt theſe ſtreaming eyes? Keep the ſevereſt eye over all my future conduct, and if I once relapſe, let me not hope forgiveneſs, 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me——My Lord ſhall ſign to your deſires; I will myſelf create your happineſs, and Cynthia ſhall be this night your bride—Do but conceal my failings, and forgive.

Mel. Upon ſuch terms, I will be ever yours in every honeſt way.

Maſkwell *ſoftly introduces Lord* Touchwood, *and retires.*

Mask. I have kept my word; he is here, but I muſt not be ſeen.

Ld. T. Hell and amazement! She is in tears.

L. T. [*Kneeling.*] Eternal bleſſings thank you—Ha! My Lord liſtening! O, Fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my own! [*Aſide.*

Mel. Nay, I beſeech you riſe.

L. T. [*Aloud.*] Never, never! I'll grow to the ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be conſenting to ſo damned a ſin as inceſt! unnatural inceſt!

Mel. Ha!

L. T. O cruel man, will you not let me go—I'll forgive all that's paſt—O Heaven, you will not raviſh me!

Mel. Damnation!

Ld. T. Monſter! Dog! your life ſhall anſwer this—

[*Draws and runs at* Mel. *is held by Lady* Touchwood.

L. T. O Heavens, my Lord! Hold, hold, for Heaven's ſake.

Mel. Confuſion, my uncle! O, the damned ſorcereſs.

L. T. Moderate your rage, good my Lord! He's mad, alas, he's mad—Indeed he is my Lord, and knows not what he does——See how wild he looks.

Mel. By Heaven, 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft.

L. T. My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Ld. T. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my name: when next I see that face, I'll write villain in it with my sword's point.

Mel. Now, by my soul, I will not go 'till I have made known my wrongs——Nay, 'till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the host of Hell her servants.

L. T. Alas, he raves! 'Talks very poetry.' For Heaven's sake away my Lord, he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and furies, will you not hear me—Why, by Heaven she laughs, grins, points to your back; she forks out cuckoldom with her fingers, and you are running horn-mad after your fortune.

[*As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.*

Ld. T. I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send Maskwell to him.

Mel. Send him to her.

'*L. T.* Come, come, good my Lord, my heart achs 'so, I shall faint if I stay.' [*Exeunt Ld. and L. T.*

Mel. Oh, I could curse my stars, fate, and chance; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! But to what purpose? 'Yet, 'sdeath, for a man to have the fruit of 'all his industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into 'his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to ga'ther it, to have a sudden whirlwind come, tear up tree 'and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of 'his hopes; What temper can contain?' They talk of sending Maskwell to me; I never had more need of him——But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried——O my precious aunt! I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil, or another woman.

'Women, like flames, have a destroying pow'r,
'Ne'er to be quench'd 'till they themselves devour.'

[*Exit.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V.

Enter Lady Touchwood *and* Maſkwell.

LADY TOUCHWOOD.

WAS it not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her intereſt ſo to be; by Heaven I believe you can controul her power, and ſhe fears it; though chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own art that turned it to advantage.

L. T. 'Tis true, it might have been my ruin——But yonder's my Lord, I believe he is coming to find you, I'll not be ſeen. [*Exit.*

Mask. So; I durſt not own my introducing my Lord, though it ſucceeded well for her, for ſhe would have ſuſpected a deſign which I ſhould have been puzzled to excuſe. My Lord is thoughtful—I'll be ſo too; yet he ſhall know my thoughts; or think he does ———

Enter Lord Touchwood.

What have I done?

Ld. T. Talking to himſelf!

Mask. 'Twas honeſt—and ſhall I be rewarded for it? No, 'twas honeſt, therefore I ſhall not:—Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itſelf.

Ld. T. Unequalled virtue! [*Aſide.*

Mask. But ſhould it be known! then I have loſt a friend! He was an ill man, and I have gained; for half myſelf I lent him, and that I have recalled; ſo I have ſerved myſelf, and what is yet better, I have ſerved a worthy Lord, to whom I owe myſelf.

Ld. T. Excellent man! [*Aſide.*

Mask. Yet I am wretched—O, there is a ſecret burns within this breaſt, which, ſhould it once blaze forth, would ruin all, conſume my honeſt character, and brand me with the name of villain.

Ld. T. Ha!

Mask. Why do I love! Yet Heaven and my waking conſcience are my witneſſes, I never gave one working thought a vent, which might diſcover that I loved, nor ever muſt; no, let it prey upon my heart; for I would rather die than ſeem once, barely ſeem, once diſhoneſt:—

O, ſhould

O, ſhould it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this that I have done would look like rival's malice, falſe friendſhip to my Lord, and baſe ſelf-intereſt. Let me periſh firſt, and from this hour avoid all ſight and ſpeech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha! but what is my diſtraction doing? I am wildly talking to myſelf, and ſome ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way. [*Seems to ſtart, ſeeing my Lord.*

Ld. T. Start not——let guilty and diſhoneſt ſouls ſtart at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fixed, as is thy virtue.

Mask. I am confounded, and beg your Lordſhip's pardon for thoſe free diſcourſes which I have had with myſelf.

Ld. T. Come, I beg your pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it ſhall not need—Honeſt Maſkwell! Thy and my good genius led me hither—Mine, in that I have diſcovered ſo much manly virtue; thine, in that thou ſhalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand——my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and conſtitute thee in his room to be my heir——

Mask. Now Heaven forbid ——

Ld. T. No more——I have reſolved——The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be ſigned, and have his name inſerted—Yours will fill the blank as well——I will have no reply——Let me command this time, for 'tis the laſt in which I will aſſume authority—hereafter you ſhall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition——

Ld. T. Is it for yourſelf? [Maſk. *pauſes.*] I'll hear of nought for any body elſe.

Mask. Then witneſs Heaven for me, this wealth and honour was not of my ſeeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one deſire——

Ld T. Thou ſhalt enjoy it.——If all I am worth in wealth or intereſt can purchaſe Cynthia, ſhe is thine.——I am ſure Sir Paul's conſent will follow fortune; I will quickly ſhew him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppreſs me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and ſhrinks beneath the weight, and cannot riſe to thank you——What, enjoy my love! Forgive the tranſ-

tranſports of a bleſſing ſo unexpected, ſo unhoped for, ſo unthought of!

Ld. T. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

[*Exit.*

Mask. This is proſperous indeed!—Why, let him find me out a villain, ſettled in poſſeſſion of a fair eſtate, and full fruition of my love, I'll bear the railings of a loſing gameſter—But ſhould he find me out before!—'tis dangerous to delay—Let me think———Should my Lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all muſt be diſcovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded.—It muſt not be; nay, ſhould my Lady know it——Ay, then were fine work indeed! Her fury would ſpare nothing, though ſhe involved herſelf in ruin. No, it muſt be by ſtratagem———I muſt deceive Mellefont once more, and get my Lord to conſent to my private management. He comes opportunely———Now will I, in my old way, diſcover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not ſuſpect one word on't.

No maſk like open truth to cover lies,
As to go naked is the beſt diſguiſe.

Enter Mellefont.

Mel. O, Maſkwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not ſee nor hear me.

Mask. No matter, Sir, don't trouble your head, all is in my power.

Mel. How, for Heaven's ſake?

Mask. Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word——How the devil ſhe wrought my Lord into this dotage I know not; but he is gone to Sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it, it muſt be by ſtratagem; for it is in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head which cannot fail. Where is Cynthia?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. Let us go and conſult her:—My life for yours, I cheat my Lord.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter

Enter Lord and Lady Touchwood.

L. T. Maſkwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

Ld. T. I cannot do too much for ſo much merit.

L. T. But this is a thing of too great moment to be ſo ſuddenly reſolved. Why Cynthia? Why muſt he be married? Is there not reward enough in raiſing his low fortune, but he muſt mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will conſent, or ſhe? Nay, he himſelf perhaps may have affections otherwhere.

Ld. T. No, I am convinced he loves her.

L. T. Maſkwell love Cynthia, impoſſible!

Ld. T. I tell you, he confeſſed it to me.

L. T. Confuſion! How is this! [*Aſide.*

Ld. T. His humility long ſtifled his paſſion; and his love of Mellefont would have made him ſtill conceal it: but by encouragement I wrung the ſecret from him, and know he is no way to be rewarded but in her. I will defer my farther proceedings in it 'till you have conſidered it: but remember how we are both indebted to him.

[*Exit.*

L. T. Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all, 'villain!' Oh, I am wild with this ſurprize of treachery: it is impoſſible, it cannot be——He love Cynthia! 'What, have I been 'bawd to his deſigns!' his property only, 'a baiting-'place! Now I ſee what made him falſe to Mellefont—— 'Shame and diſtraction! I cannot bear it, Oh! What 'woman can bear to be a property? To be kindled to a 'flame, only to light him to another's arms: Oh! that 'I were fire indeed, that I might burn the vile traitor.' What ſhall I do? How ſhall I think? I cannot think—— All my deſigns are loſt, my love unſated, my revenge unfiniſhed, and freſh cauſe of fury from unthought-of plagues.

Enter Sir Paul.

Sir P. Madam, ſiſter, my Lady ſiſter, did you ſee my Lady, my wife?

L. T. Oh! Torture!

Sir P. Gads-bud, I cannot find her high nor low; Where can ſhe be, think you?

L. T. Where ſhe is ſerving you as all your ſex ought

to

to be ſerved; making you a beaſt. Don't you know that you are a fool, brother?

Sir P. A fool; he, he, he, you are merry—No, no, not I, I know no ſuch matter.

L. T. Why then you don't know half your happineſs.

Sir P. That's a jeſt with all my heart, faith and troth—But hark ye, my Lord told me ſomething of a revolution of things; I don't know what to make on't——Gads-bud I muſt conſult my wife——He talks of diſinheriting his nephew, and I don't know what——Look you, ſiſter, I muſt know what my girl has to truſt to; or not a ſyllable of a wedding, Gads-bud——to ſhew you that I am not a fool.

L. T. Hear me; conſent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without conſulting me, and I will renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever——Nay, I'll be your enemy, and purſue you to deſtruction; I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.——

Sir P. Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke indeed——Why, where's my wife?

L. T. With Careleſs, in the cloſe arbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir P. Oh, if ſhe be with Mr. Careleſs, 'tis well enough.

L. T. Fool, ſot, inſenſible ox! But remember what I ſaid to you, or you had better eat your own horns, by this light you had.

Sir P. You are a paſſionate woman, Gads-bud——But to ſay truth, all our family are choleric; I am the only peaceable perſon amongſt them. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mellefont, Maſkwell, *and* Cynthia.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has propoſed; if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cyn. I don't know whether I have love enough——but I find I have obſtinacy enough to purſue whatever I have once reſolved; and a true female courage to oppoſe any thing that reſiſts my will, though it were reaſon itſelf.

Mask. That's right——Well, I'll ſecure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cyn.

Cyn. But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my Lord's own order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

Mel. I do not understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my Lord I laid this plot with you on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.

Mel. So.——

Mask. So, why so, while you are busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and instead of you, borrow my Lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. O, I conceive you, you'll tell him so.

Mask. Tell him so! Ay, why, you don't think I mean to do so.

Mel. No, no; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore, for our farther security I would have you disguised like a parson, that if my Lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent Maskwell! thou wert certainly meant for a statesman or a Jesuit——— but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

Mask. Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour yonder in my Lady's dressing-room; go by the back-stairs, and so we may slip down without being observed——I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own—and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St. Albans; there we will sum up this account to all our satisfactions.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have. [*Exit.*

Mask. Madam, you will be ready.

Cyn. I will be punctual to the minute. [*Going.*

Mask.

Mask. Stay, I have a doubt—Upon second thoughts, we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery; there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door——and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables——It will be more convenient.

Cyn. I am guided by you—but Mellefont will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cyn. I will not fail. [*Exit.*

Mask. Why, *qui vult decipi decipiatur.*—'Tis no fault of mine, I have told them in plain terms how easy it is for me to cheat them; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience and future caution.——Now to prepare my Lord to consent to this.——But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in it; he promised me to be within at this hour—Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace. [*Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.*

[Mr. Saygrace *looking out.*] Sweet Sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostick, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can——

Mask. Nay, good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business; it shall be tithes in your way.

Enter Saygrace.

Sayg. You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater——except——the business in hand——Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

Sayg. I have; they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starched band and cuffs.

Mask. Good: let them be carried to him——Have you stitched the gown-sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Sayg. I have; the gown will not be induced without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an hour, here in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes, let there be no light; and do not ſpeak, that ſhe may not diſtinguiſh you from Mellefont. I'll urge haſte to excuſe your ſilence.

Sayg. You have no more commands?

Mask. None, your text is ſhort.

Sayg. But pithy, and I will handle it with diſcretion.

Mask. It will be the firſt you have ſo ſerved. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lord Touchwood and Maſkwell.

Ld. T. Sure I was born to be controuled by thoſe I ſhould command: my very ſlaves will ſhortly give me rules how I ſhall govern them.

Mask. I am concerned to ſee your Lordſhip diſcompoſed——

Ld. T. Have you ſeen my wife lately, or diſobliged her?

Mask. No, my Lord.——What can this mean? [*Aſide.*

Ld. T. Then Mellefont has urged ſomebody to incenſe her—— Something ſhe has heard of you, which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

Mask. This I feared. [*Aſide.*] Did not your Lordſhip tell her of the honours you deſigned me?

Ld. T. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that; you know my Lady has a high ſpirit, ſhe thinks I am unworthy.

Ld. T. Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant pride in her to think ſo——Honeſty to me is true nobility. However, 'tis my will it ſhall be ſo, and that ſhould be convincing to her as much as reaſon——By Heaven, I'll not be wife-ridden! Were it poſſible, it ſhould be done this night.

Mask. By Heaven he meets my wiſhes! [*Aſide.*] Few things are impoſſible to willing minds.

Ld. T. Inſtruct me how this may be done, you ſhall ſee I want no inclination.

Mask. I had laid a ſmall deſign for to-morrow (as love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your Lordſhip——But it may be as well done to-night.

Ld. T. Here is company——Come this way, and tell me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Careleſs *and* Cynthia.

Care. Is not that he, now gone out with my Lord?

Cyn. Yes.

Care. By Heaven there's treachery——The confuſion that I ſaw your father in, my Lady Touchwood's paſſion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my Lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

Cyn. Here he comes.

Enter Mellefont.

——Did Maſkwell tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

Mel. No; my dear, will you get ready?—The things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

Care. You are betrayed, and Maſkwell is the villain I always thought him.

Cyn. When you were gone, he ſaid his mind was changed, and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

Care. There's Saygrace tripping by with a bundle under his arm—He cannot be ignorant that Maſkwell means to uſe his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loſs of time——I cannot think him falſe.

[*Exeunt* Mel. *and* Care.

Enter Lord Touchwood.

Cyn. My Lord muſing!

Ld. T. He has a quick invention, if this were ſuddenly deſigned——Yet he ſays he had prepared my chaplain already.

Cyn. How is this! Now I fear, indeed.

Ld. T. Cynthia here! Alone, fair couſin, and melancholy?

Cyn. Your Lordſhip was thoughtful.

Ld. T. My thoughts were on ſerious buſineſs, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Ld. T. Treachery concerning me! Pray, be plain——Hark! What noiſe!

Mask. [*Within.*] Will you not hear me?

Lady T. [*Within.*] No, monſter! Traitor! No.

Cyn. My Lady and Maſkwell! This may be lucky---My Lord, let me intreat you to ſtand behind this ſcreen, and liſten; perhaps this chance may give you proof of what you never could have believed from my ſuſpicions.

Enter Lady Touchwood, *with a dagger, and* Maſkwell: Cynthia *and Lord* Touchwood *abſcond, liſtening.*

L. T. You want but leiſure to invent freſh falſhood, and ſooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will ſtab the lie that's forming in your heart, and ſave a ſin in pity to your ſoul.

Mask. Strike then——ſince you will have it ſo.

L. T. Ha! a ſteady villain to the laſt!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

'*L. T.* Thy ſtubborn temper ſhocks me, and you 'know it would———This is cunning all, and not cou-'rage; no, I know thee well——But thou ſhalt miſs 'thy aim.'

Mask. Ha, ha, ha.

L. T. Ha! Do you mock my rage? Then this ſhall puniſh your fond, raſh contempt! Again ſmile!

[*Goes to ſtrike.*

And ſuch a ſmile as ſpeaks in ambiguity!
Ten thouſand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face.
O! that they were written in thy heart,
That I, with this, might lay thee open to my ſight!
But then 'twill be too late to know———
Thou haſt, thou haſt found the only way to turn my rage; too well thou knoweſt my jealous ſoul could never bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me——Yet are you ſilent? Oh, I am wildered in all paſſions! But thus my anger melts. [*Weeps.*] Here, take this poniard, for my very ſpirits faint, and I want ſtrength to hold it, thou haſt diſarmed my ſoul. [*Gives the dagger.*

Ld. T. Amazement ſhakes me—Where will this end?

Mask. So 'tis well——let your wild fury have a vent, and when you have temper, tell me.

L. T. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. [*Aſide.*] Thanks, my invention: and now I have it for you.——Firſt tell me, what urged you to this violence? For your paſſion broke out in ſuch imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cauſe.

L. T.

L. T. My Lord himself surprized me with the news, you were to marry Cynthia—That you had owned your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

Cyn. How, my Lord!

Ld. T. Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. I grant you in appearance all is true; I seemed consenting to my Lord; nay, transported with the blessing——But could you think that I, who had been happy in your loved embraces, could e'er be fond of inferior slavery?

Cyn. Nay, good my Lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

Ld. T. Yes, I will contain, though I could burst.

Mask. I that had wantoned in the rich circle of your world of love, could be confined within the puny province of a girl? No——Yet tho' I dote on each last favour more than all the rest, though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love; yet so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

L. T. If this were true——But how can it be?

Mask. I have so contrived, that Mellefont will presently, in the chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room: but I have put the change upon her, that she may be otherwhere employed—Do you procure her night-gown, and with your hoods tied over your face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back-stairs, and, unperceived, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he will comply with your desires; his case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions——If not, here, take this; you may employ it better than in the heart of one who is nothing when not yours. [*Gives the dagger.*

L. T. Thou canst deceive every body——Nay, thou hast deceived me; but 'tis as I would wish——Trusty villain! I could worship thee.——

Mask. No more——it wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

L. T. I go, I fly, incomparable Maſkwell! [*Exit.*

Mask. So, this was a pinch indeed; my invention was upon the rack, and made diſcovery of her laſt plot: I hope Cynthia and my chaplain will be ready. I'll prepare for the expedition. [*Exit.*

Cynthia *and Lord* Touchwood *come forward.*

Cyn. Now, my Lord!

Ld. T. Aſtoniſhment binds up my rage! Villainy upon villainy! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this diſcovered! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife! Damnation! My Hell!

Cyn. My Lord, have patience, and be ſenſible how great our happineſs is, that this diſcovery was not made too late.

Ld. T. I thank you, yet it may be ſtill too late, if we don't preſently prevent the execution of their plots:—— Ha! I'll do it. Where is Mellefont, my poor injured nephew? How ſhall I make him ample ſatisfaction?

Cyn. I dare anſwer for him.

Ld. T. I do him freſh wrong to queſtion his forgiveneſs, for I know him to be all goodneſs——Yet my wife! Damn her——She'll think to meet him in that dreſſing-room—Was't not ſo? And Maſkwell will expect you in the chaplain's chamber—— For once I'll add my plot too——let us haſte to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expoſe the ſtrumpet and the villain. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lord Froth *and Sir* Paul.

Ld. F. By Heavens, I have ſlept an age—Sir Paul, what o'clock is it? Paſt eight, on my conſcience, my Lady's is the moſt inviting couch, and a ſlumber there is the prettieſt amuſement! But where is all the company?

Sir P. The company, Gad's-bud, I don't know, my Lord; but here's the ſtrangeſt revolution, all turned topſy-turvy, as I hope for Providence.

Ld. F. O Heavens! What's the matter? Where is my wife?

Sir P. All turned topſy-turvy, as ſure as a gun.

Ld. F. How do you mean? My wife!

Sir. P.

Sir P. The ſtrangeſt poſture of affairs!

Ld. F. What, my wife?

Sir P. No, no, I mean the family. Your Lady's affairs may be in a very good poſture; I ſaw her go into the garden with Mr. Briſk.

Ld. F. How? Where, when, what to do?

Sir P. I ſuppoſe they have been laying their heads together.

Ld. F. How?

Sir P. Nay, only about poetry, I ſuppoſe, my Lord; making couplets.

Ld. F. Couplets.

Sir P. O, here they come.

Enter Lady Froth *and* Briſk.

Briſk. My Lord, your humble ſervant; Sir Paul, yours ——— The fineſt night!

L. F. My dear, Mr. Briſk and I have been ſtar-gazing I don't know how long.

Sir P. Does it not tire your Ladyſhip? Are not you weary with looking up?

L. F. Oh, no! I love it violently ——— My dear, you are melancholy.

Ld. F. No, my dear, I am but juſt awake.

L. F. Snuff ſome of my ſpirit of hartſhorn.

Ld. F. I have ſome of my own, thank you, my dear.

L. F. Well, I ſwear, Mr. Briſk, you underſtood aſtronomy like an old Egyptian.

Briſk. Not comparably to your Ladyſhip; you are the very Cynthia of the ſkies, and queen of ſtars.

L. F. That's becauſe I have no light, but what's by reflexion from you, who are the ſun.

Briſk. Madam, you have eclipſed me quite, let me periſh ——— I cannot anſwer that.

L. F. No matter ——— Harkee, ſhall you and I make an almanack together?

Briſk. With all my ſoul, ——— Your Ladyſhip has made me the man in it already, I am ſo full of the wounds which you have given.

L. F. O, finely taken! I ſwear now you are even with me; O Parnaſſus, you have an infinite deal of wit.

Sir P. So he has, Gads-bud, and ſo has your Ladyſhip.

Enter

Enter Lady Plyant, Careleſs, *and* Cynthia.

L. P. You tell me moſt ſurprizing things; bleſs me, who would ever truſt a man? O, my heart achs for fear they ſhould be all deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, Madam, you have charms to fix inconſtancy itſelf.

L. P. O dear, you make me bluſh.

Ld. F. Come, my dear, ſhall we take leave of my Lord and Lady?

Cyn. They'll wait upon your Lordſhip preſently.

L. F. Mr. Briſk, my coach ſhall ſet you down.

All. What's the matter?

[*A great ſhriek from the corner of the ſtage.*

Enter Lady Touchwood, *and runs out affrighted, my Lord after her, like a parſon.*

L. T. O, I'm betrayed——Save me, help me!

Ld. T. Now what evaſion, ſtrumpet?

L. T. Stand off, let me go.

Ld. T. Go, and thy own infamy purſue thee----You ſtare as you were all amazed——I do not wonder at it, ——But too ſoon you'll know mine, and that woman's ſhame.

Enter Mellefont, *diſguiſed in a parſon's habit, and pulling in* Maſkwell.

Mel. Nay, by Heaven you ſhall be ſeen——Careleſs, your hand—Do you hold down your head? Yes, I am your chaplain; look in the face of your injured friend, thou wonder of all falſhood.

Ld. T. Are you ſilent, monſter?

Mel. Good Heavens! How I believed and loved this man!—Take him hence, for he is a diſeaſe to my ſight.

Ld. T. Secure that manifold villain.

[*Servants ſeize him.*

Care. Miracle of ingratitude!

Briſk. This is all very ſurprizing, let me periſh.

L. F. You know I told you Saturn looked a little more angry than uſual.

Ld. T. We'll think of puniſhment at leiſure, but let me haſten to do juſtice, in rewarding virtue and wronged innocence.——Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's.

Mel. We are your Lordſhip's creatures.

Ld. T.

Ld. T. And be each other's comfort:----Let me join your hands————Unwearied nights, and wishing days attend you both; mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives.

Let secret villainy from hence be warn'd;
Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,
Torture and shame attend their open birth:
Like vipers in the womb, base treachery lies
Still gnawing that whence first it did arise;
No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

COULD poets but foresee how plays would take,
Then they could tell what epilogues to make;
Whether to thank or blame their audience most:
But that late knowledge does much hazard cost,
'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost.
So 'till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know
Whether he shall escape the law, or no.
But poets run much greater hazards far,
Than they who stand their trials at the bar;
The law provides a curb for its own fury,
And suffers judges to direct the jury.
But in this court, what diff'rence does appear!
For every one's both judge and jury here;
Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.
All have a right and title to some part,
Each choosing that in which he has most art.
The dreadful men of learning all confound,
Unless the fable's good, and moral sound.
The vizor-masks that are in pit and gallery,
Approve or damn the repartee and raillery.
The lady critics, who are better read,
Inquire if characters are nicely bred;
If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace:
They judge of action too, and time, and place;
In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,
For that's a kind of assignation learning.
Beaus judge of dress; the witlings judge of songs;
The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to Cits belongs.
Thus poor poets the favour are deny'd,
Even to make exceptions, when they're try'd.
'Tis hard that they must every one admit:
Methinks I see some faces in the pit,
Which must of consequence be foes to wit.
You who can judge, to sentence may proceed;
But tho' he cannot write, let him be freed,
At least, from their contempt who cannot read.

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